CASSELL'S FAMILY MAGAZINE

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CASSELL'S

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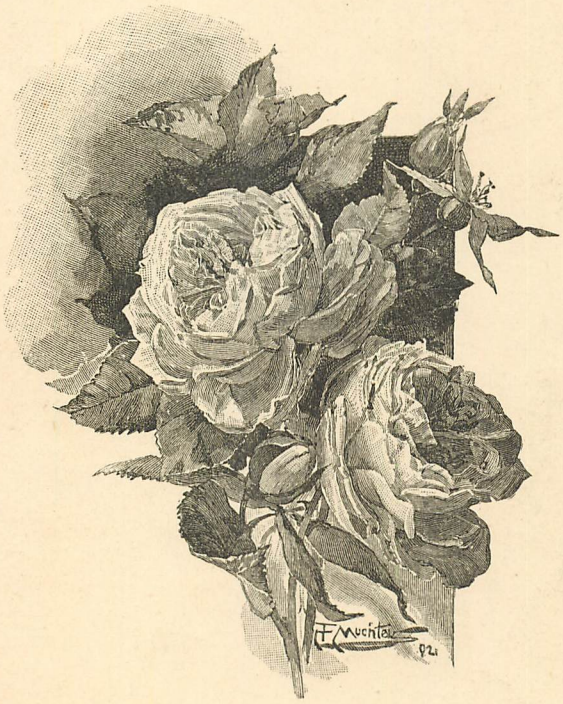

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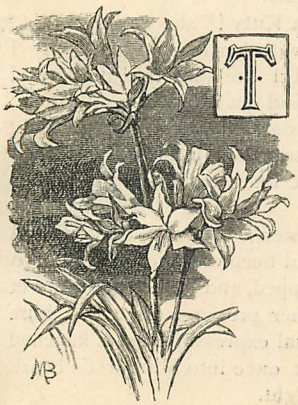
CASSELL'S FAMILY MAGAZINE

OUT OF THE FASHION.

By L. T. MEADE, Author of "Engaged to be Married," "Scamp and I," etc. etc.



CHAPTER THE FIRST.

THERE is an old-fashioned square in a very central part of Bayswater, which, for some reason, is no longer considered a desirable place of residence by the fashionable world. It is difficult to account for the unpopularity of Rosemary Gardens, for the place combines many distinct advantages. Its situation can scarcely be surpassed; it is on high ground; its soil is gravel; its aspect bright; it is within a few minutes' walk of Kensington Gardens. Omnibuses pass its select and peaceful gates, and the Metropolitan Railway is within a stone's throw from its houses.

The place is as central and convenient as a place can be; it has also another advantage: it is quiet. Close to the war and traffic of the great city, in one of the houses in Rosemary Gardens you may lie down and sleep without being disturbed by a sound. The houses themselves are large, well-planned, and convenient; the house-rents also are very moderate. Still the place is not popular. Many of these palatial houses stand empty: almost all bear marks of seediness and decay.

No. 80, Rosemary Gardens, was, perhaps, the sole exception to the universal rule. Three or four years before this story opens it had been redecorated and lightened. White paint was substituted for dark; windows were opened in unexpected corners; delicate papers graced the walls; and flowers filled the wide, spacious balconies.

Then a family arrived, and took possession of the restored mansion. This family consisted of a father and four girls. The girls were all young, but not too young, for the youngest even had stepped out of her childhood, and, when the family took possession of No. 80, was over fourteen years of age. The eldest girl was twenty. They were pleasant girls to look at, and their names were agreeable to say. Margaret was the name of the eldest; Kitty came next; then Betty; then Sibyl. Ross was the surname of the family. The girls were educated according to the fashion of their times. They were up-to-date girls, without being fast. They were learned, without being in any sense of the word blue-stockings. They were all four of them merry, unaffected creatures, and the house had a gay time when they came into it.

Margaret was twenty at this time, and she was very glad to take the lead, and to give her sisters a good time. The girls had been motherless since Sibyl was a baby. Since then they had been under the care of many tutors and guardians. Two of them had finished their education in Germany. One had studied art in one of the best studios in Paris. Sibyl, who was by many considered the cleverest of the family, had lived with an aunt, and received her education at the nearest high school.

But now they all met in London, and Margaret found herself the mistress of a mansion.

"You shall all do exactly as you please, girls," said their father. "Only Margaret shall be head. That is the only restriction I put upon you three younger ones. Margaret must housekeep, and in times of perplexity hers must be the casting vote."

"Who minds that?" said Kitty, her dark eyes flashing. "Who could object to being guided by this dear, gentle old Meg of ours?"

The little conversation was taking place at the breakfast-table; and Kitty, who was boisterous in her movements, upset a cup and saucer, and spilt its contents over the board, in her efforts to stretch across to Margaret to embrace her.

Mr. Ross was like his eldest daughter, quiet in his ways, and undemonstrative. He sighed gently over Kitty, and Margaret also sighed, but neither of them reproved her: it was not their way.

The little household thus brought together, passed three or four years of uninterrupted sunshine. The girls did not go exactly into society, but they saw

many friends both at home and abroad. Other girls came to the house, and other girls brought their brothers with them, and the brothers, as they got intimate, their young men friends. So that altogether life at the Rosses was very cheerful and very young.

The house was capable in itself of receiving any amount of sunshine. The rooms, with their great balconies, and large windows, and light decoration, would reflect back light, not absorb it. And when music and song sounded in the drawing-room, and gay girls trooped out on the balconies, and laughing, cheerful sounds floated down to the streets below, the other inhabitants of Rosemary Gardens used to stop on their way home to their own dismal abodes, and wonder what had come to No. 80, and why life was so festive there.

That old story in the Bible of the years of plenty followed by the years of famine has, to a certain extent, become typical of life, and these four girls, who looked as if no shadow could ever touch them, were not to be excepted from the universal lot. The shadow which was to darken their present brightness came on very slowly, and, strange to say, Kitty was the first to notice it.

"Margaret," she said to her sister, one evening, "do you ever observe anything queer about father?"

The girls were standing on the balcony when she spoke. The two younger ones had gone to bed, for it was past midnight, and they were tired after a long evening devoted to the entertainment of many guests. When the last visitor had departed, however, Margaret had stepped on the balcony to cool her hot cheeks, and Kitty had followed her.

"Do you notice anything queer about father?" asked Kitty, a momentary terror filling her bright eyes, as she glanced at her sister.

"No, nothing," replied Margaret. "What do you mean, Kit?"

"I don't know, Maggie. I expect I am all wrong, as you have never observed anything. But he does look pale and sighs very often, and he does not eat much."

"I have not noticed it," replied Margaret.

"Then it must be my fancy," answered Kitty.

She leant over the heavy iron rail of the balcony, and looked into the gardens in the middle of the square. They were commonplace gardens, with the usual tennis court—a somewhat badly-kept one—in their midst. But now the moon was beautifying the grass, and casting a strange magic light over the stunted London trees, and Kitty, who possessed a really artistic soul, sighed for pleasure.

"I am sleepy," she said, presently. "Good-night, Meg."

Margaret offered her cheek to be kissed, and Kitty went into the drawing-room. Margaret heard her singing the gay refrain of a song as she tripped across the room. Margaret was not romantic, nor had her artistic tendencies been in any way developed. She looked into the moonlit garden, and was not conscious of any sense of admiration as she gazed at it. Presently she, too, went back into the drawing-room, and, closing the heavy window, bolted it across.

Margaret was a very considerate young mistress, and the servants had all, before this, gone to bed. She put out the gas, and leaving the drawing-room took up her chamber candle-stick to go to her room.

As she did so Kitty's words came back to her with a painful queer insistence.

"Father looks pale; he sighs; he does not eat."

"Folly!" muttered Margaret. "Surely if there was anything wrong, my father would tell me. I have noticed nothing. Well, I shall watch him to-morrow."

She went half-way up the stairs to her room, when again the memory of the teasing words came back to her. And now she saw a picture of her father rise up quite clear and distinct before her. It was a faded picture, and gave Margaret a queer, lonely sense of something intensely pathetic.

"That little goose of a Kitty!" she said. "What has the child done to me with her morbid notions? I positively can't rest until I see into this matter. I must go downstairs, and find out if father is still up."

She leant over the banisters, and saw that the light was still burning in the entrance hall. Then she tripped downstairs, and a moment later was knocking at her father's study door.

Mr. Ross bade her enter; he looked astonished when he saw her. He had been walking up and down his room, and now he stopped, and looked at Margaret in a harassed way, as if her presence distressed him. This was not at all his usual expression, but it fastened the arrow of conviction at once into Margaret's heart. She saw that Kitty was right.

Her manner was particularly gentle as she went up to her father.

"You know you are doing very wrong," she said. "You ought not to be up at this hour. You are tired; you are cold—your hands feel like ice."

"I am not really tired, Maggie," said Mr. Ross. He had quite recovered his ordinary manner now. "You cannot expect old folks never to wish to be quiet and alone. Yes, of course, it is different with you, my dear, and glad I am to think it. You can't have too much life, and mirth, and fun. But old people don't want to sleep as much as the young do, and in short, my dear Margaret, I like to walk up and down my study when the house is absolutely quiet. If I give you and your sisters full liberty, my dear child, it is not too little to ask you to do the same for me."

"Then you are vexed with me for coming down," said Margaret.

Kitty would not have said this; but then Margaret was never remarkable for tact.

"No, my dear; I am not vexed," said Mr. Ross. "You have never done anything to cause me real vexation, my dear Margaret."

Here he came over, and, bending down, kissed Margaret on her forehead.

"I think you are happy," he continued; "you and your sisters! You all seem very happy."

"Yes, father; we are perfectly happy."

"How many years have we been together in this house?"

Margaret looked up, surprised at the question.

"We have been here over four years," she said. "Sibyl was fourteen then—she is eighteen now."

"And you are twenty-four, Margaret?"

"Yes."

"You have had four happy years," said Mr. Ross. "That is something—every girl can't say that. Your mother told me she never knew perfect happiness until she was my wife. But you have all had sunny girlhoods, my dear. And then the future—a woman has many possibilities in the future! Now, Margaret, you have disturbed my meditations, and, as I begin to feel sleepy, I shall set you an excellent example by going to bed."

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

THIS was the beginning of the shadow which, by and by, grew dark, as such heavy clouds will. This night and this conversation were the beginning of the subtle change which overthrew the household, and caused a moral earthquake, and the upheaval of all old customs.

But the shadow came on slowly, and the great crash did not occur until nearly a year after Margaret had intruded upon her father's midnight meditations.

It was early summer now again, and the four girls sat in solemn conclave. There were no visitors in the house this day, and the four had the big drawing-room to themselves.

"I can't stand it any longer," said Sibyl, who was decidedly the most spoilt member of the household. "I don't know what you mean to do, Betty, and Kitty, and Margaret, but I call it immoral to go on like this."

"Yes, Sib, storm away!" said Kitty, "what's up, now? For four years we lived in this house, and had no rows, and now there are three or four a week! Go on, Sib; what has struck horror to your righteous and most moral soul?"

"Oh! I can't help it," said Sibyl. "You are unkind, Kitty. You make fun of everything; but this is no laughing matter—it isn't, really. It's about the baker."

Here Sibyl swept across the room, and, flinging herself on Margaret's neck, burst into a passion of weeping.

"I have kept it in all day," she said, "but I must let it out now, or I shall choke. And, oh! it *is* so immoral, and it's so cruel of Kitty to laugh."

"I'm not laughing any longer, Sib," said the repentant Kitty.

"Hush, darling, dry your eyes, and tell us what is the matter," whispered Betty. "It can't be worse than the dressmaker affair of yesterday," she murmured, *sotto voce*.

Margaret did not speak at all, but she passed her arm in a wonderfully comforting way round Sibyl's slight waist.

"Now, what is it?" repeated Kitty. "Out with the grievance, Sibyl—don't keep us in suspense."

Sibyl raised her head from Margaret's breast, dashed the thunder drops from her eyes, and began emphatically:—

"You don't suppose I trudged over to the Stores to fetch those horrid cakes for nothing," she said. "The children were coming, twenty of them. You know how children will eat. You know I *had* to go—I could not help myself."

"But our own baker is much nearer than the Stores," interposed Margaret, gently.

Sibyl turned, and almost sprang upon her.

"That's it, Meg—that's the immorality of it—and, oh! it isn't the poor baker's fault, for he has got ten children, and an ailing wife. I don't blame him—he has got to look after himself, of course he has."

"I wondered why the cake I ordered did not come," said Margaret. "I ordered a specially large one, which cook was to frost. I wondered to see all those small cakes and tarts on the table."

"I wouldn't tell you until the party was over, Meg. You gave me leave to arrange it, and I would *not* have you worried. The fact is, Margaret, and Kitty, and Betty, the baker refused to make the cake until his bill was paid. Poor baker! And aren't we an immoral family?"

The other three girls looked at one another. They uttered no exclamations of astonishment, but they exchanged glances full of meaning. Sibyl, having delivered herself of her story, walked across the room, and hid her burning face against the velvet curtain, which cosily draped the window.

"You did bravely, Sib," said Kitty at last. "And so you spent your own money on all those cakes and tarts! Poor, generous Sib!"

"There's my purse—it's empty!" said Sibyl.

She opened it disdainfully, and tossed it on the floor.

"Well!" said Kitty, in an emphatic voice.

Nobody echoed her "Well!" She had a brightly-coloured face, and now her cheeks became damask.

"There's the butcher, too, and the dressmaker," Betty began, looking at Margaret.

"Oh, hush, Betty!" said Margaret.

It was now Kitty's turn to take up the defensive.

"Why should Betty hush?" she said. "We have all known this thing for a long time in our hearts, and we have been afraid to speak of it. Sibyl is quite right; it's positively immoral of us to keep silence any longer. Come away from the window, and let's get each of us into our own cosy chair, and thresh the matter out. Come, Sib, you know you like the softest cushions; here you are."

"There's no manner of use," said Margaret. "But, of course, girls, if you wish——"

"We do wish," said Betty. "It can't be half such a nightmare, if we talk it over. Kitty is right; it's cowardly not to face the thing. Now then, Margaret, you are the housekeeper. Be prepared for a plain question. Why don't you pay the bills?"

"I did, till within a year ago," answered Margaret. "Then my father told me they were all to be sent to him, and he would settle with the tradespeople."

"Which, of course, he hasn't done," interrupted Sibyl.

"I'm afraid not, Sib."

"And we have been having no end of parties, and *such* a jolly time! Why, I've never had so many new dresses in my life, and beauties—no expense spared. It was only a month ago father told me to go off to Madame Wild's, and get the very prettiest party-dress she could manufacture. I danced off with a heart like a feather, and Madame Wild looked me in the face, and said, 'I have written a letter to your good papa. When he answers it, you shall have my best attention, Miss Ross.' It was the insolent look on Madame's face that first opened my eyes. I came straight home, and I walked into father's study, and I said, 'Father, Madame Wild, the dressmaker, has written you a letter, and she says she will make my dress when you answer her letter.' 'I will reply to her to-night,' answered father, in his gentle voice, and he looked up at me as if he was awfully tired. I did not say another word, and, of course, I went away quite satisfied. But I hadn't the heart to go back again to Madame Wild. I suppose now that father never answered the letter, and that she has never been paid."

"No," said Betty, "Madame Wild has never been paid, but I don't care so much about her. It is Mrs. Moore I am thinking of. She makes all our plain dresses, and comes here to do upholstering and all kinds of odd jobs. She came here this morning, Margaret, and she cried, yes, she did. We owe her twelve pounds, and some of the money we owe is for out of pocket expenses, and she is a widow with four little children. I told her she should have her money to-morrow; and she shall, if I sell all my rings to pay her."

"Why don't you speak, Maggie?" said Kitty. "Why do you sit there, looking so white and still, with your hands clasped together? What is the matter? Has father given you no money at all during the past year?"

"A little," said Margaret, slowly. "The servants' wages are not greatly overdue; that is one thing."

"What does this mean, Maggie? How is this to end?" said Sibyl. "I have some sense of honour left. Have you?"

"I hope so," said Margaret, "only I am divided. Oh! you don't understand, any of you. My father—all these are reproaches heaped on my father! Oh! you can none of you understand!"

Margaret was so reserved that her few words fell now with the force of lead on the three girls. They did not speak for a moment; then Kitty once more came to the front.

"We simply can't go on like this, Maggie. If you are afraid to speak to father, I will. He *must* give us money to pay these tradespeople, or——." Her lips turned white, and her eyes misty: she was looking into a queer shady country of perplexity and ruin, and the glimpse frightened her.

Margaret rose suddenly from her chair.

"Something must be done!" she said. "I have put off the evil day as long as I could, but we have got to face it. I will speak to my father to-night."

She left the room. The three other girls looked at one another, and Kitty slowly shook her head.

"It's going to be awfully bad!" she said. "Maggie wouldn't look like that, nor speak in that dreadfully solemn way if the very, very worst wasn't to be expected."

"Well," said Sibyl, "after to-day, and my experience with the baker, joined to my experience a month ago with regard to Madame Wild, I declare stoutly that I wish I was the daughter of a day labourer, for I don't believe he would be allowed to go in debt. There, get away, you horrid, fat, luxurious footstool. I hate you, for I don't believe you were paid for!"

"Kitty," said Betty, "how much do you think my turquoise and pearl ring would fetch? And who will buy it from me? I can't really take it to a pawn-shop."

Sibyl stared at her two sisters. Their conversation about the ring was not immediately interesting. She dragged a little wicker chair into the balcony and went out. She seated herself in this, and, taking a book of poems, pretended to bury herself in its contents. She read on steadily, although, of course, she was not taking in a single word. Misfortune and pain were new things in Sibyl's life, and she was holding them at bay with all the strength of her youth.

Each of the sisters had high spirits, but Sibyl's were perhaps the highest and the proudest. They were all nice-looking girls, but Sibyl had the most distinguished face, and the most independent bearing.

"It's immoral!" she kept on repeating, under her breath. "We ought to be living on bread and cheese. Oh! I do wish I was the daughter of a day labourer!"

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

MR. ROSS was in the habit of coming home late. Margaret, therefore, as she sat in his study, and listened for the sound of his latch-key in the hall-door, was not surprised when eleven struck in a silvery chime from a carriage-clock on the mantel-piece. Twelve o'clock sounded by and by, and the young watcher lying back in the depths of a great arm-chair, gave no sign or start of impatience. The fact was she was dreading the interview which lay before her, and every moment of delay was a relief.

Margaret Ross had a stronger face than her other sisters; she was the only one of her family who was decidedly dark. Her eyes were large, pathetic and beautiful; otherwise her face was plain. She had been always a grave sort of girl, intensely reserved, and cold to strangers. Those who knew her fairly well, however, found many points to like. She was so reliable, so honest, so sure to do her very best about everything. Those who knew her well thought there was no one in the world like Maggie, but then, very few knew her well, for it was not in her nature to let many people get a glimpse into her heart.

In the old days, when her sisters were at school, Margaret had always spent her holidays with her father. They had a great many points in common, although in some respects their characters were opposite as the poles. During these holidays they

became the closest of friends, and Margaret quickly learned to give her father the very first place in her heart. He was there enthroned. Few more sacred places could be found than the heart of this good, brave girl. She could not bear to see any faults in her idol. For a whole year she had lived down her fears, refusing to allow the black dreadful thing which was pursuing her to look her full in the face.

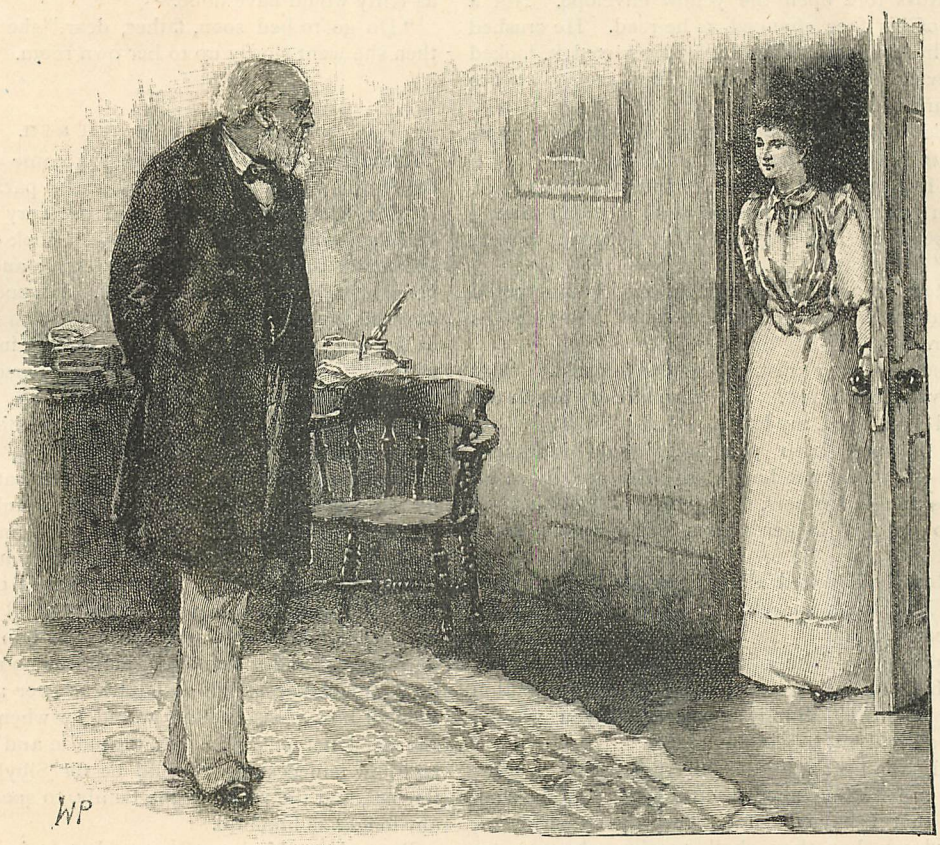
"Honour on one hand—my father on the other," she kept repeating now. Her lips trembled; her feet and hands were cold.

She did not make any reply, but, taking his hand, led him into the study.

It looked cosy and bright, and Margaret had added to its attractions by placing a tempting tray of supper on a side table.

"What good angel has told you to do that, Margaret?" said Mr. Ross. For the first time an anxious expression seemed to come into his face. He looked at the food as if he were really famishing.

"I thought you would be hungry, father. Shall I cut you some sandwiches?"



"HE STOPPED, AND LOOKED AT MARGARET IN A HARASSED WAY" (*p.* 2).

The little clock on the mantel-piece sounded one, and now at last the latch-key was heard in the door. Maggie started to her feet, and turned on the gas. She was in white, and her dark hair was ruffled by her long vigil. She had never looked more girlish, and more nearly pretty than when she stepped into the hall to meet her father.

He started when he saw her.

"My dear child, what is wrong?" he said.

"I thought I would sit up to have a little talk with you, father," she said.

Mr. Ross put his arm round her neck, and kissed her affectionately.

"You look wonderfully young to-night, Maggie," he said, in a pleasant voice.

"As many as you like, my dear. The fact is, I had no time to eat dinner in town this evening. I had some very pressing calls, and was too harassed to eat. Nothing to trouble you, Maggie, only you may cut me a good lot of sandwiches. By the way, did anyone call to see me to-day?"

"I believe a good many people. I wanted to speak to you about *them*—and—other things."

"Ah, just so, my dear."

Mr. Ross opened his private secretary, and busied himself opening and shutting drawers.

"After all, I am glad you are up, Margaret. Yes, I'll take a cup of coffee. Thank you, my love. It is nice to have a kind daughter to attend on one."

He received the cup from her trembling fingers,

drained it off, and helped himself instantly to another.

"I am better now," he said. "That is the good of being a small eater, Margaret. I get exhausted, and a little refreshment instantly restores me. Now I am fit for anything. Where are my messages, and letters, and telegrams, dear? I will first glance through them, and go to bed."

Margaret pointed to a salver on the centre table.

"All those came to-day," she said. "That telegram arrived between eight and nine this evening."

Mr. Ross tore open the yellow envelope. Not a muscle of his face changed as he read. He crushed up the little missive after he had perused it, looked instinctively at the empty grate, but, seeing no fire there, thrust it into his pocket.

"You'd better go to bed, Margaret," he said, as he deliberately opened a letter.

"But I've sat up on purpose to speak to you, father. Can you grant me just five minutes? I don't think I shall keep you any longer. *May* I speak to you, father?"

Mr. Ross glanced at his watch, quickly smothered an impatient sigh, and turned round to face his daughter.

"If you must, you must, Margaret," he said. "But is it so very important? We have already begun the day, and I am tired, my love."

"Oh, I won't keep you long," said Margaret. "And I—I would not hurt you. You are above all others to me—all others. Father, it's just that we can't go on any longer unless you give us some money."

Mr. Ross had looked almost terrified at the beginning of Margaret's speech, but towards the end his brow cleared.

"My dear child," he said, going up to Maggie, and putting his hand on her shoulder, "so much emotion and for so little? Surely my dear, if you wanted money you had but to ask for it?"

"I did," she began, but he interrupted her.

"You are fretting about the tradespeople," he said. "I own that I have been temporarily embarrassed, and hard up, but they shall receive cheques to-morrow. If you wish it, I will write them out now."

"Oh, no, father, not while you are so tired."

Mr. Ross smiled slowly.

"Well, I think you might let me off until the morning," he said. "I don't break my word; and I promise to send out cheques then. Have I a list of our creditors, Margaret?"

"Yes, in this envelope."

"Leave it on my table. I may get up early to-morrow morning to attend to the matter. And now for your own immediate wants. What do you say to this?"

He pulled a leather case out of his breast-pocket, and opening it, slowly counted into Margaret's hand ten crisp £10 Bank of England notes.

"Oh, father, if you are going to pay the bills, I really don't want all this. You have given me one hundred pounds."

"Keep it, child. Did I not say we were going to begin on a new system? No debts, ready money paid down for everything. Your hundred pounds won't last long if you dress as I like to see you. And now, good-night, Margaret, and never again, my love, get into a tragic state of mind for the lack of money. As long as I live I hope I may keep you well supplied. Good-night, Maggie, dear."

Mr. Ross pressed a prolonged kiss on his daughter's brow. An impulse made her throw one arm round his neck and return his embrace almost as fervently as Kitty would have done.

"Do go to bed soon, father, dear," she said. And then she went slowly up to her own room.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

THE next morning when Margaret came downstairs the footman handed her a thick sealed packet.

"Mr. Ross must have gone out very early this morning, miss," he said, "for when cook came down she found the hall door on the latch; and he hasn't been near his room Louisa says. I found this, too, directed to you Miss Ross, on my master's table."

Margaret felt that the man was staring into her face with undisguised curiosity. She drew herself up, took the packet, and answered coldly—

"I expected Mr. Ross to be absent this morning. Have breakfast served at once."

The man withdrew, and Margaret hated herself for having told an untruth. She certainly had *not* expected her father to be away. His manner last night had soothed her, and the hundred pounds in her pocket had given her a pleasant sense of security. She slept well, and awoke in almost good spirits. If her father had been going through a temporary embarrassment and it was over, there was no reason why they should not all be as happy as ever again. She thought how pleased Betty would be when she found she need not part with her turquoise and pearl ring, and how unnecessary it would be for Sibyl, the baby, the pet, and the rebel of the family, to speak of them any longer as immoral.

But when Margaret went downstairs, and encountered the eager, curious expression on her servants' faces, she felt her heart sinking again, and resolved to say nothing about the hundred pounds until she had opened the letter which her father had left for her.

It was a lovely morning, and the breakfast room at No. 80 was as sunshiny and cheerful as a room could be. Window-boxes filled the wide window-ledges, and the perfume of mignonette, sweet pea, and monthly roses floated in from the open windows, and greeted the girls as they sat down to their breakfast.

They all looked bright, and young, and cheerful, as they gathered round the table, and the servants certainly could detect no shadow of a cloud on any of their faces. Sybil seemed in even wilder spirits than usual. She said she had got a scheme in her head, and she wanted to consult Maggie and the others.

"I thought it all out last night," said Sybil. "I lay awake until two o'clock, and then it was formed to

perfection. After that I dropped asleep. It is a lovely scheme, and since I thought of it I don't want to be a day-labourer's daughter, for this will be much more interesting. Shall we all come up to the drawing-room, Maggie, and shall I tell you the lovely thing I have thought of?"

"I'll come to the drawing-room after I have attended to the housekeeping," said Margaret.

"Oh, the housekeeping! I don't think we ought to have any dinner, I really don't!"

"Hush, my dear, the servants may hear you!"

"Well, Maggie, what if they do? Let us be honest, whatever happens, say I."

"Oh, don't tease," said Kitty, putting her arms round Sybil's waist. "Do let poor old Meg have her morning in peace. She'll come to us when she can. Now, you know about Betty's ring? She wants to consult you as well as me. Come away to her room, and let's have a consultation."

"Don't do anything about the ring without telling me first," called Margaret after the others.

They stared at her in some astonishment but made no reply. They went slowly up to the drawing-room, and, seating themselves in a heap together on an ottoman, began to examine the contents of Betty's jewel-case. They were intently discussing the merits of different rings, when a quick step was heard on the stairs, and Maggie, with her face all aglow, and her eyes full of tears, rushed into their midst.

"Oh, girls, girls, it's all right!" she exclaimed. "It's all right! Look at these!"

And she tumbled a perfect sheaf of cheques into Kitty's lap.

Betty snatched one up, and began to read it out aloud.

"'Pay Mr. John Hogg eighty-four pounds seventeen and fourpence, sterling.' Why, Margaret, that's the butcher! Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!" she screamed.

"Oh, girls, where are my rings? Don't let my darling rings get crushed under your feet. I need not part with them now, and I value them so much."

"Is there any cheque for Mrs. Moore in this great pile, Maggie?"

"Yes, for every one," replied Margaret. "I don't believe when these are paid that we shall owe a farthing in the wide world."

"Heavenly!" replied Sybil. "I can't realise it! I positively can't. Don't speak to me any of you, girls. Let me lie back with my eyes closed, and try to comprehend the thing. We don't owe a penny in the wide world! Can such bliss be ours?"

"And here is dear father's note," continued Margaret. "He says I'm to send out all these cheques directly. He is obliged to go away for a couple of days on business, but he will be back by Saturday at the latest. He sends his love to you all, girls."

Margaret half held out the note, but the other three were not particularly eager to read it. Betty and Kitty were tumbling over the cheques, and reading the amounts to one another. Sybil lay back with her eyes shut, and a happy, rested expression on her face.

Margaret put the note into her pocket.

"I have another joyful surprise for you," she said "What do you say to all these?"

And she pulled the banknotes out of her purse. Even Sybil now darted up from her reclining position, and came forward.

"Ten ten-pound notes!" she repeated. "All our debts paid, and ten ten-pound notes to the good! Maggie, did the genie of the ring visit you last night?"

"Father was the genie," replied Margaret. "He gave me this money, and he said he would write cheques to meet all the bills. These are the cheques. I believe I was a coward, girls, not to speak to my father long ago about these difficulties."

"But you did, Maggie; scores of times."

"He says not. I could not have explained myself clearly."

"And *I* went to him," interrupted Sybil, hotly, "and I spoke out plainly enough, you may be sure. And he made me a promise, and he——"

"Hush!" interrupted Margaret. Her face had grown pale and stern. She clenched her hand vehemently over her father's letter.

Sybil looked up, startled. Margaret's anger was only like a flash. It melted into sweet sunshine.

"I do feel happy," she said. "And I cannot bear a word against my father just now. He has been embarrassed, but it is over; it is all right now. I feel as if I could go down on my knees and thank God."

"Darling Meg!" said Kitty.

She went up to her elder sister, and crushed the hand, which still held Mr. Ross's letter, in an almost painful squeeze.

"Can't we celebrate this event?" said Sybil, "after you have consigned all those cheques to the care of the post? Can't we just go off somewhere, and have a real jolly day? To Richmond, or somewhere? I don't believe I can stay indoors after this. I had a plan, but it has vanished. It is not wanted—let it go! Oh! I tread on air, and I must breathe air. I simply must go out!"

"It will take me an hour," said Margaret, "to write letters to accompany these cheques. After that we can go anywhere. I leave the choice to you, girls."

She went out of the drawing-room, closing the door after her. Betty and Kitty began to put the rings back into the jewel case. Sybil rushed to the piano, opened it, and played with intense gaiety and spirit two or three of the lightest airs then in vogue. She was a musical girl, but even the power of the music could not hold her just then. As she said, she wanted air. She must breathe it fully, or her wild happiness would half-kill her. She went to her favourite seat on the balcony, and, leaning over the railing, looked down into the square garden. There were gates to Rosemary Gardens, and from where Sybil stood she had a good view of the gates. At this hour of the morning, carts, carriages, equipages, of all kinds were coming and going. The cries of the vegetable-mongers and the fruit-sellers in the street beyond were borne to the young girl's ears. The sun shone

over everything; the day was cloudless, and the freshness of spring still lingered in the June air.

A young man walked rapidly through the gates, and came in the direction of No. 80. He was tall, with broad shoulders. He had a cane in his hand, and a rose in his button-hole. The moment she saw him Sybil sprang from her post of observation, and, sinking down on a low garden chair, pretended to turn the leaves of a book.

The young man had seen the flash of her white draperies, however. He hurried his footsteps, came under the balcony, and stood still.

Sybil did not move, nor raise her eyes. She looked like a maiden spellbound by what she was reading, but she did not turn a page. The young man remained quite still, then he began, in a very low, sweet sort of way to whistle that most seductive of all airs, "Garry Owen."

He whistled right through the air once, and was beginning it a second time when bang went Sybil's book on the floor, and her head popped over the balcony.

"I might have known that was you, Mark! What a hideously vulgar thing you are whistling! How do you do?"

"I do very well, thank you. Is it too early to pay a call at No. 80?"

"Yes, it would not be correct."

"There's some nice shade in the Gardens now, and nobody there."

"Go and take a stroll in the shade, and when you're tired whistle 'Garry Owen' once again. Good-bye."

"But, Sybil——"

"Yes; I really can't shout to you any more from the balcony. These are not the days of——"

She was absolutely going to say Romeo and Juliet, but blushed a rosy red instead.

"These are not the days of Shakespeare," responded the young man, gravely, "so, as I really want to say something, had I not better come in?"

"How tiresome you are, Mark; and unreasonable, and provoking! Well, if you must come in, you must. I'll run down, and let you in, myself."

She rushed across the drawing-room, knocking down a small table in her flight.

"What *is* the matter?" exclaimed Kitty. "Where are you going, Syb?"

"Oh, it's only that stupid Mark Danby. He will bother me to speak to him."

She slammed the door noisily after her.

"Stupid, indeed!" echoed Kitty, looking at Betty.

Betty rose, stretched herself slightly, and yawned.

"Never mind," she said. "I am sure Mr. Danby knows his own affairs, and Syb won't be guided by anyone."

"I don't want to interfere," retorted Kitty. "Mark Danby is, without exception——"

Betty held up her finger.

"Hush!" she said, "they are coming——" and the next moment the pair entered the room, Sybil talking high, with a pretty pretence of anger.

"Don't you think Sybil is very unkind to refuse me, Kitty?" said Danby. "She informs me you are all bound for Richmond, and declares I am on no account to accompany you. You'll let me come, won't you, Kitty?"

"You can come if you please," answered Kitty. "That is, if Margaret says yes."

"Where is Margaret?"

"In the library, writing letters."

"I'll find her and get permission at once."

"THE FOOTMAN HANDED HER A THICK SEALED PACKET" (*p. 6*).

"No, don't; she's frightfully busy."

"I'll just get permission and come back again."

He left the room without waiting for another word.

Sybil buried her head in a great bunch of lilies of the valley, and laughed a low silent laugh into their bells.

What a day it was! How different from yesterday, with its shadows and its distress. Yesterday Sybil felt stern and virtuous; the path was of thorns, but she would tread on them, and not wince when they pierced her. To-day the path was of roses, and she felt that she was part of an idyl, and that Tennyson ought to write about her and Mark.

Margaret's letters were written and posted, and soon after a merry party of five went down to Richmond. They had a boat and went on the river, and afterwards dined in a private room in the "Star and Garter." A feeling of rest was over all four girls. Disgrace had nearly touched them, but it had gone away again. Danby and Sybil laughed and quizzed one another unmercifully. The other three made plans together. The old life was to be resumed, and now it was to be truly a perfect life, for no debts could be contracted.

Three of the girls talked of money, for the want of money had been their sore sorrow of yesterday. But Sybil, who, had perhaps, felt that sorrow the most keenly the day before, had soared high above the region of money now. She laughed, and jested, and avoided personal topics, but all the time her heart was singing the sweetest of all songs, and her eyes looked like dark violets.

The girls came home in the dusk of the evening, and Danby bade them good-bye under the shade of the porch at No. 80.

"I'll see you to-morrow," he whispered to Sybil.

She turned her head away. He took her silence for consent, and ran off happy.

The girls went into the house. A plain man, dressed very plainly, was standing in the hall.

"Can I speak to you in private, ma'am?" he said to Margaret.

END OF CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

MY NEW DRAWING-ROOM.

I AM not one of those wonderful women who furnished and decorated my house for thirty pounds, neither do I belong to the category of those who keep their husband, servants, and children in the lap of luxury for a pound a week. Such women are only invented to torment other women's husbands by their "high-flyings," which I, for one, do not believe in. It is aggravating enough, all the same, to find one's husband poring over the pages of a fashionable journal, and believing like Gospel the assurance of a certain Mrs. Macalister, who tells her readers that it is the duty of every good housewife to collect all the scraps of fat left on the plates and have them melted into dripping, which becomes the very favourite food of good Mrs. Macalister's husband, governess, and six children!

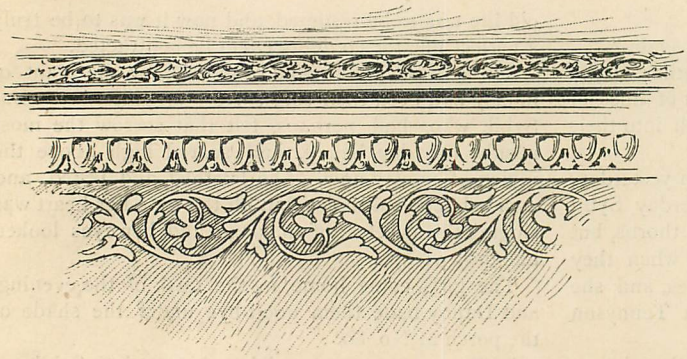
On the following Monday morning I received, as usual, my allowance of a pound a week for each person in the house, but it was given me with a sigh—a sigh which, as I well knew, was for that ideal housewife, the Macalister.

To return to decorating. My house is supposed to be pretty—people are kind enough to admire it—and as I have spent very little money upon it, I have promised to describe some of my things, thinking the account may perhaps interest others.

Here, again, you must not expect much, for I cannot make furniture, never having learned carpentry, and I cannot do wonders with packing-cases, which the people who write papers seem able to conjure into every conceivable article of furniture. Where they get their packing-cases from, I often wonder. I doubt if I ever had more than one at a time. Whenever I get anything from a distance which arrives in a case, a request is certain to be sent with it that the "returned empty" is to go back at once on pain of a fine, and so, alas! my visions of wardrobes and tables remain in the air, and my genius has no vent.

I have lately been re-decorating my drawing-room. I cannot tell you how much I wish that it was a room in an old house with thick walls and oak panellings. But it is only the drawing-room of a modern semi-detached villa, and the walls are such that we not only hear our neighbour's piano, but can generally tell you what they are going to have for dinner.

When we came to the house the drawing-room was hung with a white and gold paper, which made the very light room a glare of whiteness. It was too good to take down, and we endured it for years, till one unfortunate day the silk curtain caught fire, and the paper was spoilt. In a few seconds the room was on fire, and it was wonderful that we were able to put it out and lost as little as we did. It was, as I well knew, entirely my fault. What woman in her senses would have bought Pongée silk for



MY FRIEZE.

grate curtains : velvet or serge would not have caught, or, if they had, would not have blazed up.

When, through this accident, it became absolutely necessary to re-paper the room, I found it was very difficult to get one to suit it. The room was so light and so commonplace—it was so exactly a second-rate villa drawing-room.

The judicious spending of money would transform it. I knew what was wanted—I was perfectly able to design and to order—but the most important item—the money—was wanting. It would not have been right to spend more than a very small sum, so coloured glass, Morris papers, and carved wood must be dismissed from the mind, just as if they had never existed. Do you know the thick brown paper in which parcels are wrapped? I do not mean the crackly brown, but the thick dull brown. In most large towns there are several paper manufactories or large stores where this paper can be bought at a very low price, and can be cut in any length or width required. I had the walls and the door papered with it ; I then bought a wide transfer pattern in a conventional design, and had it ironed off as a frieze just below the cornice. Of course, in ordering I was careful to see that I got a pattern which would iron off yellow, for the other shade, blue, would not have shown.

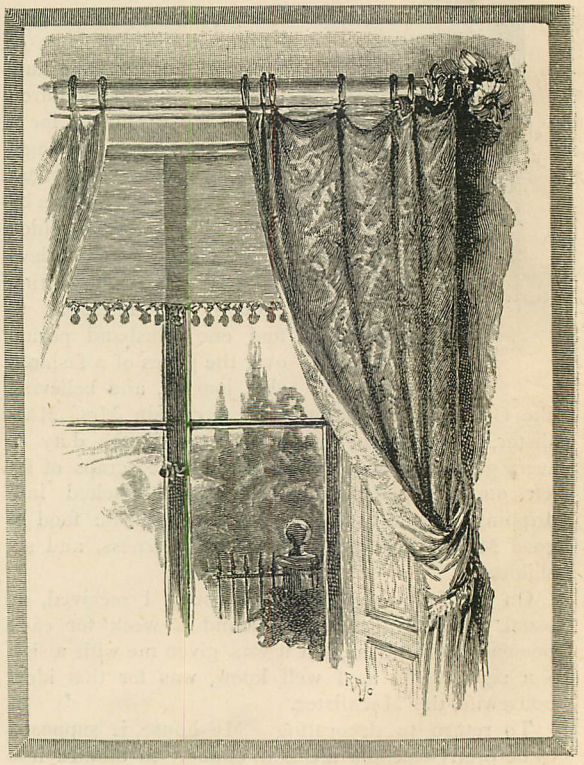
When this process was finished I proceeded to paint. It was difficult to reach the top of the room, and the house steps felt so unsafe that I determined another time to have my frieze cut separately, and paint it before pasting it on the wall. I painted the pattern only in one colour—deep orange. I used oils, and mixed plenty of body colour to prevent the orange sinking in ; round the edges of the design I painted a line of dark brown, which made the whole thing stand up. It was a great success. I did not paint the panels of the door, but over the top I had a cone-shaped panel, with an arrangement of the same design.

When the paint was quite dry, I had the whole thing sized and varnished. Varnish darkens the colour, and makes the paper keep clean much longer, but I think it looks just as well without it. I have seen the same paper since with only the frieze varnished, and the effect was quite as good.

As the house was new when we came to it, we had fortunately never had the wood-work painted, so I was able to have the shutters and wainscot left as they ought to be for that style of decoration—in the plain wood, and simply French-polished. Before I polished the shutters I ironed a pattern on, and painted it in sepia.

I was determined to have no more mantel-covers to burn, so as the mantel-shelf was very ugly, I had a case made in white wood, to run along the top and go down in front, just as a mantel-border does. On the front of this I painted bunches of oranges and their blossom, making a little conventional border in brown at the edge. When this was polished it looked beautiful. People who cannot draw could make one equally well by ironing on a pattern, or by having one cut and stencilling it on.

For curtains I bought the new printed sheeting—white, with a delightful pattern in orange. These curtains are two-and-ninepence the yard, and they are so thick that they serve equally well in winter and summer, and nothing wears and washes like them. As I wished to darken the room, I made



HOW I TREATED THE WINDOW.

THE FIREPLACE.

for the top part of the window little curtains of orange Pongée silk; I did not frill these, but edged them with a ball silk fringe. I fastened them top and bottom with little rings attached to a piece of wire.

My carpet went all over the floor, and was in colour greenish blue, with an almost imperceptible orange pattern; it was a Windsor, and cost about three pounds.

Over my mantel-shelf I hung a beautiful square oak mirror, which had been made to my order. The frame was solid oak, very well moulded, and the glass had a bevelled edge about one inch in width. This cost me sixteen shillings, and will last for ever. I burnt my initials on the back with a hot knitting-needle, as I wished my possessions to have some identity for future generations!

This mirror, with pictures framed in carved oak and black ebony, looked very well on the walls. As one of the corners wanted colour, I bought one of the prettily-cut corner shelves which are now so cheap. I covered this all over with Japanese gold paper, and the effect was excellent.

I had two occasional tables made in American walnut, from my own design; these I stained with oak staining and French-polished.

I covered some of the arm-chairs with a new tapestry in blue and straw colour: it is fifty inches wide, and one-and-sixpence the yard.

The sofa and two other chairs had a blue and orange cretonne covering—a very large orange pattern on a china blue ground. These large patterns have more character than the smaller designs.

My small chairs are black, with rush seats, and I have a long rush-seated music-stool and a bamboo bookcase. This last is long and narrow, only three shelves high, and a bamboo rail at the top makes a safe shelf for china.

In place of a second sofa, I have a cane couch, or reclining chair, at twenty-five shillings, with an adjustable back. This, with two or three silk pillows, makes a delightful resting-place.

THE WOES OF MRS. CARACTACUS BROWN.

MR. AND MRS. CARACTACUS BROWN lived at 10, Alabama Terrace, Islington. The locality was very "desirable," close to the omnibus route, with trees at the front and back, and spacious gardens. True, it was a long way from Kensington—as Mrs. Brown, who was "highly connected," said with a little sigh—but then you couldn't have everything!

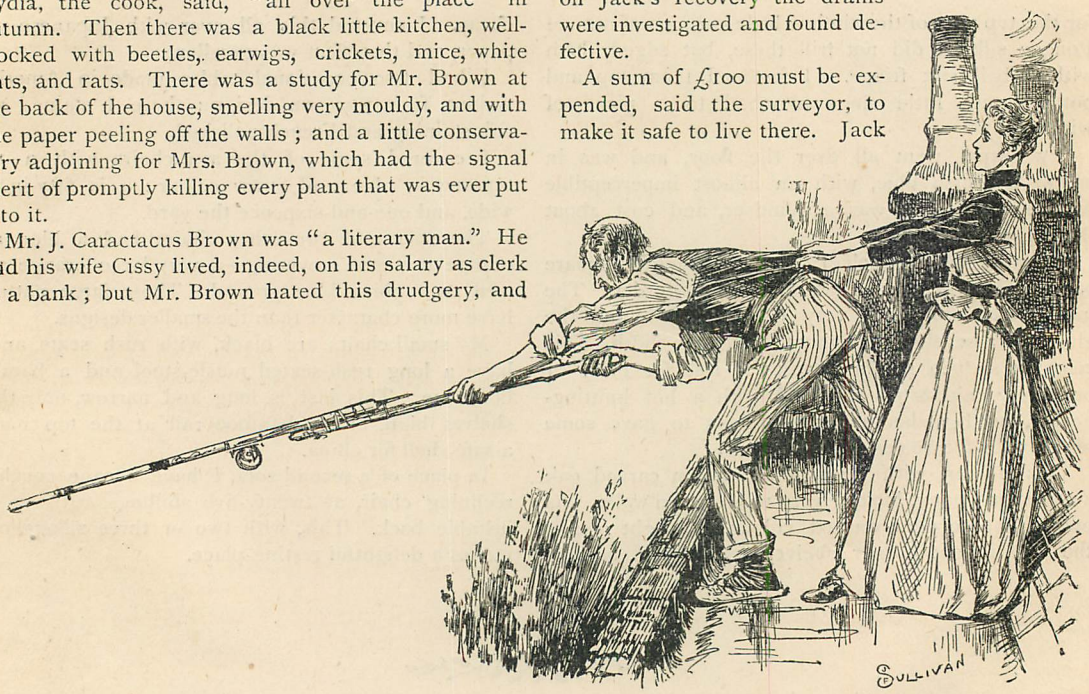
Mr. and Mrs. Brown were newly married, and had fallen easy victims to the first enterprising house-agent whom they had had the ill-luck to meet. Newly-married people are so very gullible! The house was, of course, "everything that could be wished;" it was "venetian-blinded" all through, though goodness knows that little enough sun penetrated to it, and what little there was the neighbouring trees intercepted. But Mrs. Caractacus' own home had been in Devonshire, and she thought the trees "so nice and rural." Like Papillia, at first she "sighed for the shades," but soon would have entreated, had entreaties availed aught, to have the "odious, odious trees" removed. They were bare and black in winter, bred caterpillars and obstructed the sun in summer, and shed their foliage, as Lydia, the cook, said, "all over the place" in autumn. Then there was a black little kitchen, well-stocked with beetles, earwigs, crickets, mice, white ants, and rats. There was a study for Mr. Brown at the back of the house, smelling very mouldy, and with the paper peeling off the walls; and a little conservatory adjoining for Mrs. Brown, which had the signal merit of promptly killing every plant that was ever put into it.

Mr. J. Caractacus Brown was "a literary man." He and his wife Cissy lived, indeed, on his salary as clerk at a bank; but Mr. Brown hated this drudgery, and yearned for the time when he might leave it, and lean entirely on the ungrateful Muse, who certainly does not welcome the young aspirant as cordially as she might. So in Mr. Brown's "off hours" he wrote incessantly, if unsuccessfully. In his little damp study, overlooking the back gardens of the terrace, he worked in the mornings from six to nine, and at nights as long as Mrs. Brown would let him; for his Cissy, descending white-robed, like Lady Macbeth, from the upper regions, generally put a stop, sooner or later, to this burning of the midnight oil.

Mrs. J. Caractacus Brown was, as we have said, well connected. Like Mrs. Micawber, she had "a family," who were, however, mostly conspicuous by their absence. They had not regarded the match with much favour, and even when they came to town, were chary of their visits to Alabama Terrace. But Mrs. Brown was fond of her Jack—whom, indeed, she believed to be a genius, second to none—and in these early days of married life nothing troubled her much. What though the kitchen range proved defective? Jack did not mind a few spoiled dishes. What if the parlour chimney developed an obnoxious tendency to smoking? Were they not above such trivialities?

But there came a change. About a year after their marriage Mr. Brown had a bad attack of typhoid fever, during which his wife nursed him night and day, and only just pulled him through. A heavy bill was run up at the doctor's; and on Jack's recovery the drains were investigated and found defective.

A sum of £100 must be expended, said the surveyor, to make it safe to live there. Jack



"NO STRING OR LONG POLE COULD POSSIBLY CONVEY THE POISONED MEAT FAR ENOUGH" (*p.* 13).

applied to the house-agent, but not one penny would the landlord pay. The tenant must take the consequences. "The houses will all be drained at the close of the lease," said the agent—a fat, puffy, red-faced man—seemingly oblivious of the fact that the said lease had two years yet to run, and that the Browns might die of fever any time during that period.

"When you come to *my* house," said poor Jack, making a last effort, "you will find it well-drained already."

The agent smiled.

"The landlord," he said, "will congratulate himself on having had such a good tenant."

So nothing more was to be obtained on that score. Mr. Brown managed somehow to pay the £100, and, barely recovered from fever, set to work harder than ever to supply the deficit. He sat up nearly all night, and wrote articles by the dozen. Only a small percentage of them, alas! were successful. Editors are so adamantine. Poor Cissy contributed her little mite, too. She wrote for the *Gentlelady*, but only once, sad to say, was she ever lucky enough to earn even the modest sum of 10s. She denied herself gloves, walked a mile to save a halfpenny, and bought the *Exchange no Robbery* once a week to study in its columns what she could find to sell.

MRS. SMITH'S NOVEL GARDENING OPERATIONS (*p.* 14).

The year came round to June, and now a fresh tribulation sprang up. A parrot suddenly began talking loudly next door. As we have said, Mr. J. Caractacus Brown's study was at the back—an out-building open to every sound—and Mr. Brown being ill and overworked, this parrot "told" on his nerves. The bird was put out early in the morning into the garden for the day. It seemed to entertain a special grudge against poor Jack. As long as Mr. Brown was safe away at the bank the parrot was moderately quiet; but early and late, when the unfortunate author was struggling in the throes of composition, it rattled, shrieked, whistled without a respite.

At last Mr. Brown, forgetting his dignity, climbed with much trouble upon the house roof, from where he could see the offender, and abused it loudly. If this proceeding had no other result, it at any rate relieved his feelings.

Mrs. Caractacus struggled up after him.

"Can we poison it?" she asked, fiercely. Her humanity in most things was even carried to excess.

No, it couldn't be poisoned; for, as Mr. Brown presently proved, no string or long pole could possibly convey the poisoned meat far enough. Nor would Cissy's garden syringe "carry" to the proper distance, although Jack drenched all his own dining-room and study into the bargain in the attempt.

All this, however, produced no effect: so Mrs. Brown tried writing notes politely requesting that the bird be "kept inside the house" while Mr. Brown was pursuing his literary avocations. The notes not being answered, Cissy, with some inward trepidation, tried calling in person. So one day she presented herself at the front door of No. 8, where, after a succession of timid little knocks, and a period of fifteen minutes' waiting, a dirty servant-girl came to the door, munching.

"Wha' d'yer want?" she politely inquired, with her mouth full.

"I want to speak to your mistress — about the parrot," said Cissy, in as firm a tone as she could assume. "Could it make just a little—less noise? It makes my husband so ill."

"We ain't got no parrot," retorted the muncher, sulkily.

But through all the grime and blackness of what is, by courtesy, denominated "the hall," Mrs. Brown became aware of the enemy's well-known shriek.

"I hear it now," she cried.

"Well, go back 'ome and yer won't 'ear it so loud," and the slattern slammed the door in her visitor's face.

Mrs. J. Caractacus Brown came back depressed. As for her husband, he was half frantic. He could eat no dinner. In the small hours of the morning, two dogs began a concert: one next door, the other at No. 6. The unfortunate tenant of No. 10 put his head out of the window and shrieked himself hoarse at them; but even that had not the desired effect of waking the neighbours, who, apparently, could sleep through anything. Next morning Mrs. Brown girded herself anew for the fray. She wrote notes to the two dogs—or rather, to their owners—and tried to enlist the sympathy of some of the other dwellers in the terrace. Here again she was met by rebuffs; one "lady" made it a principle never to interfere with the neighbours; another possessed a little dog that *did*

occasionally bark, and therefore she couldn't think of protesting, lest the war be carried into her own domain ; and a third individual (this last was a retired greengrocer) remarked unsympathetically, "the parrot nor the dawgs don't disturb me nor my missus—we goes to sleep."

And then next day another parrot began ; a noisier, louder one even than the last ; and a few weeks later a piping thrush started from somewhere or other, with a long, shrill, fiendish note that seemed to go through your—or at any rate Mr. Brown's—head. He went almost wild. It was still but July, and there was the charming prospect of this sort of thing going on all summer. Mrs. Brown, aided by Lydia, mounted one morning again on to the roof to reconnoitre and find out if possible where the new enemies lay.

"It's so difficult," groaned Mrs. J. Caractacus, almost in despair at the medley of roofs and gardens, "to find out where these birds are."

"That's where it lays, ma'am," said Lydia.

"I believe," went on Cissy, wrinkling up her pretty forehead into a thousand creases, "that the sound comes from over *there*. Yes, that tall red chimney-stack at No. 2."

"Well, *I* can't say as I seem ter git the hang of it, ma'am," said Lydia, ruefully. "Oh," as a louder rattle than usual came, "yis, that's at Mrs. Green's, the grocer's ; I'll run round there d'reckly as I've taken my apern off and cleaned up."

"Buy it—offer them any money for it," called out Mrs. Brown, in an agony of inspiration, after Lydia, as the said damsel disappeared down the roof ladder.

Cissy stood for some time longer on the roof, thoughtfully contemplating her neighbour of No. 9—old Mrs. Smith, who was conducting some novel garden operations in her green-house. She was tying oranges (just ordered at three a penny at the nearest grocer's) on to privet bushes and ferns by means of green wool. The wool and the oranges together gave the place somewhat of the look of a tea-garden. Mrs. Brown groaned as the idea of a long term of residence in Islington crossed her mind. Perhaps some day she might do the same !

The new parrot was satisfactorily bought ; but, oh, the rashness of poor mortals ! It was a fatal indiscretion. Now no week elapsed without other birds starting up in some direction. These were all brought in turn for Mr. and Mrs. Brown to buy. They might have been bird-fanciers, to judge from the cages and aviaries that, with their occupants, were poured in upon them. And through it all the original offender, the demon bird from next door, kept on its tormenting way.

Mr. Brown grew thin, pale, and morose. Under his varied tribulations his appetite failed more and more, and he complained that his Cissy didn't study the "poetry of dining." Cissy sighed : had not Jack found even a tough rump-steak delicious, in the early days of their house-keeping ? She descended to the kitchen to confer with the faithful Lydia.

Lydia having demonstrated to her own satisfaction that such a kitchen range was incapable of turning out anything but chops and steaks, Mrs. Brown (who knew nothing of cooking) had no alternative but to believe her. When Cissy escaped, sad and weary, from the recital of the kitchener's shortcomings, she emerged upstairs only to hear the familiar shriek of the "demon bird" next door.

But Lydia was sympathetic too, in her way. When Mr. Brown at last got an article accepted by one of the leading reviews, she quite shared in the household joy, though she knew as much about reviews as a Hottentot.

The said review, however, delayed unaccountably long in bringing out the article, and poor Jack, who was in sad want of money, asked every day at breakfast, "Have the proofs come ?" It went to Cissy's heart to keep saying "No." At last, one sultry morning, Lydia came flying in, her cap awry, her features aglow with excitement. "Here's master's prukes !" she cried eagerly. Cissy could have embraced her. What "prukes" might be, Lydia hadn't the least idea, but she had looked for them every day as eagerly as Cissy herself.

The parrot infliction was at its height, when, one day, one of Mrs. Brown's fashionable friends came over from Kensington to visit her. The said damsel drove all the way in a carriage and pair, which created some excitement among the juvenile population of Alabama Terrace. But Cissy did not derive much comfort from her visitor, who looked at the small house and cheap furniture through those horrible eye-glasses adopted of late by the fashionable world. "Don't mind me," she said, with an indefinably patronising air ; "I like to take in people's houses. And how do you like living out here ?"

The visitor spoke as if "out here" were the wilds of California.

Cissy explained that she would like it very well, were it not for parrots, which disturbed Jack so.

"Parrots ! dear me, how odd ! why, there's nothing I enjoy so much as a parrot. We've got one ourselves, and I always prefer to sit in the room with it. You must scold your husband : he'll soon get over those fads. But now tell me, you poor thing, how you manage to get about, when you're out all this long way ?"

"I go on the top of a threepenny omnibus," said Cissy, pride here coming to her rescue. She began, for the first time, to think that her dear Ella had rather bad taste. But that young lady sat calmly through a long afternoon, and on the journey home beguiled herself with thinking what a very kind thing she had done in coming all that long way to see poor Cissy, who was so terribly lonely.

Ah ! London *is* lonely indeed, as Cissy reflected often. Islington, too, in its way, prides itself on being quite as "select" as Kensington. If Cissy or her husband had died, the neighbours would have been equally ignorant. Poor Mrs. Brown, who was fresh from a Devonshire village, where everyone knew her, felt her isolation terribly.

The summer passed, as—even in London—summers do, and the parrot infliction temporarily with it ; for

luckily parrots, being used to the tropics, cannot stand the rigour of a London yard in winter. In the autumn Jack and Cissy had just two days' holiday—enough, as Sam Weller said, to make them wish for more—but it was as much as they could afford, either in time or money. Then, for two months, the terrace was daily enveloped in clouds of smoke from the leaf-burning carried on every day by its inhabitants. Cissy always divided her year, in her own mind, in this way : fog, east wind, spring cleaning or carpet shaking, parrots, dogs, leaf-bonfires, and fog again. This was her almanac.

But, next April, the parrot plague began again. Mrs. Brown groaned aloud when she heard the "demon bird's" first hideous chuckle. She had now a little Caractacus—a sickly boy of three months old, who was fretful, and took up a great deal of her time. They were still very poor, but Cissy had neither spirit nor leisure even to try to write for the *Gentlelady* now. The bird's din grew louder with the fine weather, though Jack, out of consideration for poor over-worked Cissy, complained very little ; yet he grew to look so fagged and worn that she took a vast resolution—worthy, indeed, of the spirit of a Roman matron—considering her extreme shyness and timidity. This was no less a project than to attend a police-court and try to get the evil redressed. She said nothing about her plan to Jack, but, one morning at ten, presented herself at the nearest police-court with her complaint. It was a rainy day, and she had donned her oldest hat and a rather seedy waterproof. Her attire went against her, and she received but scant attention—indeed, her complaint was hardly listened to, and she was dismissed by the magistrate with a humorous remark. But to poor Cissy it wasn't humorous at all ; and it seemed even less humorous next day, when, on fearfully opening the paper, she found a facetious little "police-court" paragraph about her visit, describing her as a "poorly-dressed female." This was the last drop ! The rest she could have borne ; but that she —well born and highly connected, a descendant of the Montmorencys—should be held up to obloquy as a "poorly-dressed female ! "—oh ! it was *too* bitter !

But Cissy outlived this too, and many other things. She even bore up under Lydia's departure, for that estimable damsel married the baker's assistant at the end of the second year ; and her successor was far from satisfactory. After Mrs. Brown had been domiciled for three years in Alabama Terrace, she seemed to have got hardened to most troubles. By that time two little Browns had appeared on the scene. Perhaps the parrot worry had affected their infancy, for it is certain that they had a somewhat pale and precocious appearance. Like poor Caddy Jellyby's inky infant, they seemed to reflect their surroundings, and were preternaturally grave and thoughtful.

And Mr. and Mrs. Caractacus Brown became very unpopular in the neighbourhood. The police-court story got about, and when they took their walks abroad they were often hailed by small boys as "a fourpenny lot," and other epithets of a like nature. Hootings, meant doubtless to bear some faint resemblance to a parrot's chatter, were occasionally heard from evilly disposed children at the area gate. Alas ! and the real parrots still went on their sinful way.

"LOOKED AT THE CHEAP FURNITURE THROUGH THOSE HORRIBLE EYE-GLASSES" (*p.* 14).

The Browns applied finally in desperation to the landlord. But it was all of no use. Public sympathy was not to be diverted in their direction.

Only the rich can afford to make conditions ; and Mr. and Mrs. J. Caractacus Brown were poor. The neighbours openly derided them ; the landlord, a needy individual, was suspicious of tenants who, for so small a cause as a parrot, sought the protection of the police-court. The three years having elapsed, he politely intimated to them that he had re-let their abode to more desirable occupants.

But happier days were in store for them. "There is a tide in the affairs of men," and Mr. Brown now took it at the flood. Just in the nick of time he struck a lucky vein with a review article and saw his way to leaving the Bank. They went into the country, where little Caractacus and his sister became fat and rosy, and whence Mr. Brown, writing later to a friend, remarked that he was at length happy enough to be out of the reach of the rural sounds that had pestered his life while in London. Their landlord, it need hardly be said, paid them no compensation for any of their improvements ; their house was promptly re-let to third-rate lodging-house keepers ; and parrots, piping thrushes, yapping dogs, and other torments flourish as of old in Alabama Terrace.

Sweet Christmas Bells!

Words by SAMUEL S. MCCURRY. *Music by* GERARD F. COBB.

VOICE.

PIANO.

Moderato (♩=76). *mf* Sweet Christ-mas Bells! Your voi-ces bring Blest

dolce e legato. *mf* Ped.

cres. *f*

mus-ings while ye glee-ful ring; Far up the vale your an-them swells, And

cres. *f*

dim. *cres.*

mu-sic wakes the snow-clad dells, Where mute is ev-'ry liv-ing thing: Sweet

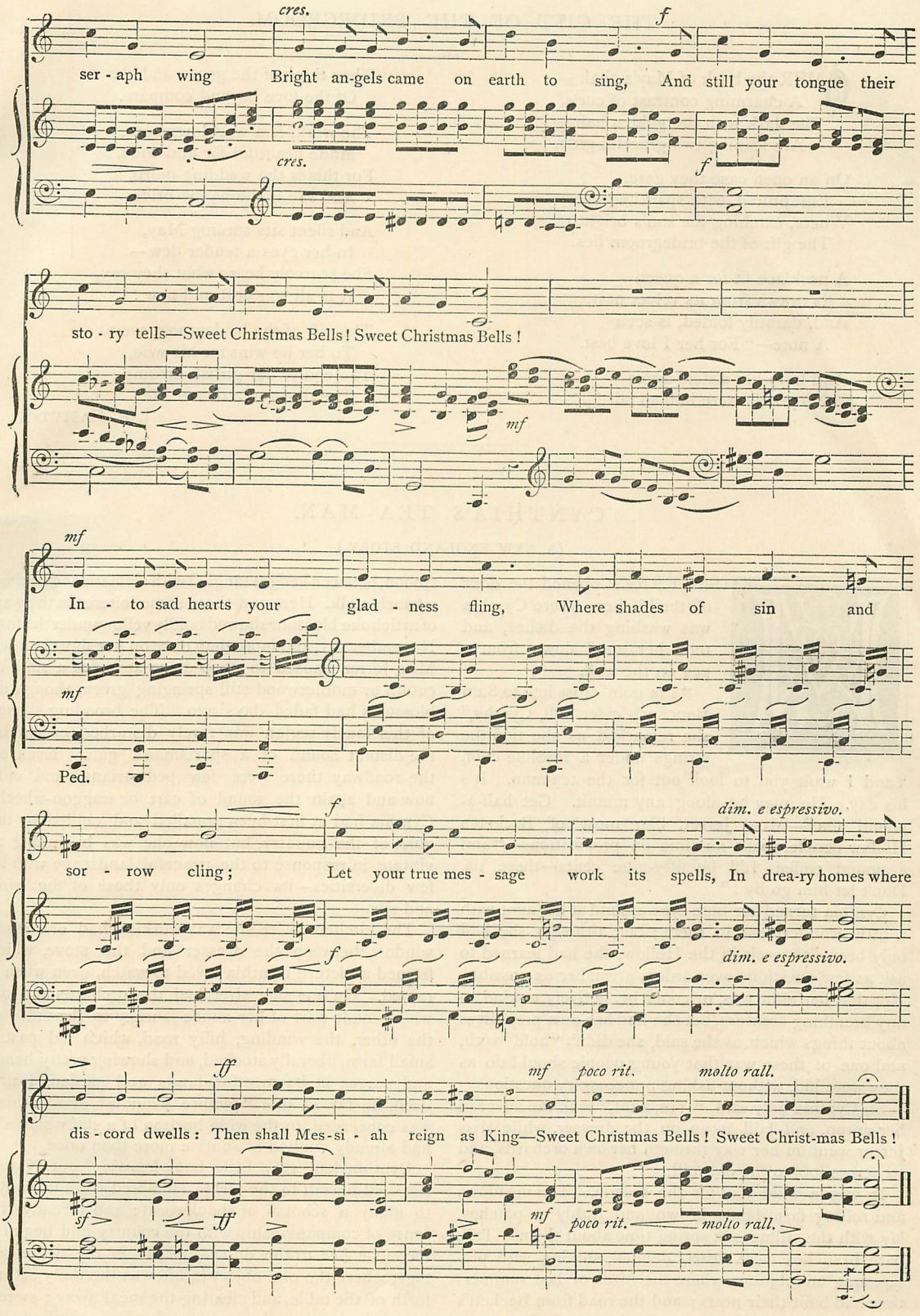
dim.

rit-ar-dan-do. *mf*

Christmas Bells! Sweet Christmas Bells! Long years a-go on

rit-ar-dan-do.

cres. *f* *sf* *mf*


cres.
f
ser - aph wing Bright an-gels came on earth to sing, And still your tongue their
cres.
f
sto - ry tells—Sweet Christmas Bells! Sweet Christmas Bells!
mf
mf
In - to sad hearts your glad - ness fling, Where shades of sin and
mf
Ped.
f
dim. e espressivo.
sor - row cling; Let your true mes - sage work its spells, In drea-ry homes where
f
dim. e espressivo.
ff
mf poco rit. molto rall.
dis - cord dwells: Then shall Mes-si - ah reign as King—Sweet Christmas Bells! Sweet Christ-mas Bells!
sf
ff
mf
poco rit.
molto rall.

THE GIFT OF THE BRIDEGROOM.

OVER the back of May's chair—
A charming contrast of curls,
The dark with the golden hair—
Are leaning two graceful girls.

On an open case they gaze,
Enraptured, with sparkling eyes,
Where, catching the sun's bright rays,
The gift of the bridegroom lies.

A necklace fit for a queen
Is drawn from its velvet nest,
And, daintily folded, is seen
A note—"For her I love best."

And both her sisters agree
No jewels were half so fair!
They think of the gems, and she
Of the love beyond compare.

The world is a world newborn,
Made beautiful far and wide,
For this is the wedding-morn,
And she is the happy bride.

And silent sits smiling May,
In her eyes a tender dew—
She scarcely hears what they say,
It is all so sweet and new!

The gift of the bridegroom seems
To her he wins for his wife,
The end of her girlish dreams,
The dawn of a dearer life!

J. R. EASTWOOD.

CYNTHIA'S TEA-MAN.

(A NEW ENGLAND STORY.)

ISS JERRER opened the door of the kitchen, where Cynthia was washing the dishes, and took her hood down from a peg on the wall.

"I'm goin' cross lots to Sam Boucher's cider mill, Cynthy," she remarked, as she tied the strings under a resolute chin, "and I want you to look out for the tea-man. It's his day. He may be along any minnit. Get half-a-pound tea"—Miss Jerrer, like most of Beckett's Hollow people, spent no time on prepositions—"and a pound coffee. It'll be fifty-nine cents—there 'tis. Don't let him go by!"

Cynthia turned her blue eyes around at her aunt with a little wonderment in them; but, although she had only been one week in the Hollow, she had learned to ask as few questions over orders given her as possible. Not that her aunt was, or could be, actively unkind to any breathing creature, but she had her own prejudices about things which, as she said, she didn't "hold" with, and one of these was that young people should do as they were bid, without asking unnecessary questions.

So Cynthia only said, "Yes, aunt," took the silver in her apron, and laid it up on the dresser, while Miss Jerrer went on her way through her own orchards, and so across lots to the old mill.

It was a mild day for the season. The meadows and rolling farm-lands, brown and ruddy in patches, lay with the stillness of spring-time about them. Tall, bare branches were clearly defined, shining with picturesque undulations where the birds of last summer-time had built their nests; and the road from Beckett's Village to the Hollow wound, white and clear as a ribbon, between hedges tangled with clematis and leafless sumach-stalk. Here and there some loiterer in the way of artichoke blossom showed boldly yellow under the first November sky, and more than once on her short journey Miss Jerrer paused to stoop down and pick a stalk of catnip or motherwood still springing green, though its blossoms had faded days ago. The brooding silence of this lonely region was rarely disturbed, except by the distant sound of a sportsman's gun. Even on the roadway there were few pedestrians, and only now and again the sound of cart or waggon-wheels. Cynthia had at first been appalled and chilled by the quiet of the country, but now she was beginning to vibrate in response to the peaceful landscape with its few diversities—its changes only those of the wind and sky.

The kitchen where she was working had one small window between the dresser and the stove, which framed a picture Cynthia loved to watch, even when it rained. On one side stretched the orchards and lots which made part of her aunt's journey to the mill; at the other, the winding, hilly road, which led past a small farm, liberally stocked, and showing pretty bends and curves in its meadow-lands and garden, losing itself, so far as this "picture window" of Cynthia's was concerned, in the wide horizon of a sky which she had already studied at sunrise more than once.

Cynthia had very little book-learning, but Nature revealed herself to the girl in a hundred ways unknown to many a scholar or bookworm; and already this sense of companionship with the country had begun to reconcile her to the dulness of life in the white cottage, where the one object in life was the daily setting forth of the table, and clearing the meal away; sweeping and cleaning the rooms; darning, mending, and

patching ; bringing out the two lamps, trimmed and lighted, when evening gathered ; and going to bed at nine o'clock to the minute, after making sure the pail for the milkman was duly set forth on the front stoop and well covered.

So far, not even a visitor had appeared at the cottage, although Miss Jerrer was by no means unsociable ; but it was a "busy time 'round," Cynthia had heard her say, and when, as was their custom, they sat in the late afternoon at the sitting-room windows sewing, Miss Jerrer would comment on passers-by, wondering how this, that, and the other might be faring with them ; but they were all mere figures and names to the girl, not like real people—she had never been spoken to or been addressed by anyone but her aunt—and now it was rather interesting to think she was to see and speak to the "tea-man," whoever he might be.

A fish-vendor had gone by earlier in the day, and Cynthia had watched her aunt go to the front window and call out in a loud tone, "No, no—not to-day" ; then, returning to watch his progress up the road from the little window by the kitchen stove, she said reflectively, "I guess George Bason's doin' better this year—looks kind of spruced up." So Cynthia concluded George Bason—like "Kezi Hotchkiss" and "Het Bunce," of whom her aunt spoke so familiarly—was a family friend ; and, as she waited for the tea-man, she wondered why her aunt did not speak of him by name. A comical idea occurred to the girl as she stood in her own little window. She would try to ask him his name—and keep it to herself ! When others spoke of their friends, she would regard the tea-man as hers!

A shrill sound interrupted her reverie—something between a "whoop" and a flute-like whistle—and Cynthia, darting to the parlour windows, saw a trim little waggon had stopped before the door, and a young man of seven or eight-and-twenty, with a pleasant face, bright brown eyes, and a general air of spruceness and good-humour, had sprung to the ground, tossing his reins carelessly across the dash-board. The name and address of "The Great South Co." was painted in clear blue letters on the yellow side of the little waggon, and Cynthia flew into the kitchen for her money, and presently, trembling with anxiety lest the purchase should not be all right, ran out down the three steps to the gate, while the tea-man was fumbling among his packages and china-ware.

He turned round suddenly as he said : "Well, Miss Jerrer——" and then stopped short, for, instead of Miss Jerrer's somewhat severe elderly countenance and angular figure, there stood a girl of seventeen, with a fair, sweet face, framed in softest pale gold-coloured hair—the colour of her cheeks deepening as he stared a moment—not rudely—but in surprise.

"If you please," said Cynthia hastily, "half-a-pound of tea and one pound of coffee."

She stood still, holding out the money.

"For Miss Jerrer ?" said the Tea-man, pleasantly.

"Yes, sir," answered Cynthia, thinking what very kind, bright eyes he had, and how neat and trim he looked. The Tea-man whistled a little under his breath while he turned over his packages and found what Cynthia demanded.

"Do you want tickets or china ?" he asked in a moment, looking up from the back of the waggon. Cynthia stepped out into the road. She could not imagine what he meant.

"*What*, sir ? Do I want——"

"Tickets or china ?" he said in his cheery, pleasant voice.

"A ticket to China !" gasped Cynthia. The Tea-man dropped the package in his hands and laughed merrily.

"Oh, my dear child, excuse me !" he exclaimed. "Well ! well ! You didn't know perhaps we give two tickets with a pound of tea, *or* china ware," and he displayed quite an assortment of china to Cynthia's delighted gaze. She was deciding on a plate, when he said in his cheery voice :

"You're new here, I guess ?"

"Yes sir," assented Cynthia. "I'm Miss Jerrer's niece——" She looked at the kind face turned towards her and added : "I used to live in Michigan !"

"Sure !" exclaimed the Tea-man.

"Why, of course," laughed the girl, to whom Beckett's Co. vernacular was rather puzzling at times, "why shouldn't I be sure ?"

And again this curious young man laughed outright—

"Well, I declare Miss—" he paused, and the girl seizing the opportunity, said :

"Cynthia Jaye's my name," she blushed deeply, but took courage to add—"If you don't mind, what's yours ?"

"David Birch," was the prompt reply. "Now we be introduced, I guess," and again the two young people enjoyed a laugh.

"Well—I guess it's about time to take your china, Miss Jaye," he said, presently. "P'raps tickets are best. I think she's saving up for a set."

And David Birch explained the *modus operandi* of the tea companies in "giving away" china with their sales.

"Why, how nice !" said Cynthia, and then, with a wistful look up the hilly road between its brown and green border lands, she added : "What a grand time you must have riding all the time, and the country is so—so *beautiful !*"

"Think so ?" said Birch, "Well now there be times when it's hard work—rainy weather, you know. But it was more because I *do* like the country I took to it. I tell you what, there's more taught in the way a chipmunk runs along a stone wall, or a maple tree turns red and yellow than half the people shut up in houses ever know. Why there's times I have to just stop and *look*, I *tell* ye !"

David Birch leaned his elbows on the tail-board of the tea waggon, and both he and Cynthia looked out through the enclosure to the picture framed by the other end. A sudden flight of birds across the pale-hued sky startled them.

"Well, guess I must be going," said Birch, suddenly stepping back.

"SHE STOOD STILL, HOLDING OUT THE MONEY" (*p.* 19).

"Oh *must* you?" said Cynthia. She wished so much that she could ask him when he would come again and, as if he read her thought, he observed:

"I'll be round this day two weeks."

He sprang into his seat, caught up the reins, and, nodding pleasantly, repeated:

"This day two weeks, Miss Jaye."

"All right," said Cynthia, holding her packages tightly, and looking at him with wistful, childlike eyes. "Good-bye!"

She felt curiously exhilarated by this little experience, and during the half-hour which elapsed before her aunt's return the girl's gentle mind was occupied to its fullest capacity by thoughts of "her Tea-man," as she called him — his interesting life — what he had said about the chipmunks and the maple trees. During the next few days, her own studies of the changeful country under the November sky increased in interest, and if she was unusually silent, there was no touch of sullenness, and Miss Jerrer could complain of nothing in the girl but that she was "quieter'n most of 'em are."

It rather pleased Miss Jerrer that, when at meeting, her niece was seen for the first time by the congregation, there was so much sweet composure in the way the girl conducted herself. "Kezi Hotchkiss," a veteran widow who lived in her own house and drew a pension, was Miss Jerrer's foil as a rule in all social matters, and "Kezi" could not but approve of this fair-haired, modest girl, who, if she had very little to say, certainly, as Kezia admitted, "looked no fool." Invitations to tea in the neighbourhood were given and accepted, and every time Cynthia had a fluttering hope that her Tea-man might be of the company; but his trim-built figure, bright eyes, and bronzed face were never to be seen, so she came to fancy him journeying endlessly over that quiet, sobbing country, on the alert for every bit of blue sky or every colour of the sunset back of the road they called the "Ridge."

Cynthia had not the vaguest idea that she had been building up a romance which reality might shatter, when she found herself the Tuesday fortnight eagerly waiting for Birch's whistle and the sight of the yellow-covered waggon. It sounded at last. Miss Jerrer was in the kitchen, "sweetening" her cider, and Cynthia with a trembling hand received money for the coffee—no tea this time; but what did she care? The purchase meant simply nothing now.

"Why, how d'ye do, Miss Jaye?" said Birch, as brightly as ever. "What *this* time?"

"Oh—*coffee!*" said Cynthia, with a dimpling smile.

And then, when the package was delivered, the two young people gazed at each other for a moment in one of those silences that can mean more than words.

"Been well?" said Birch, a trifle awkwardly.

"Yes, sir. Have you had a nice time riding round?" inquired Cynthia, rubbing one finger slowly up and down the tail-board of the waggon.

"Why, *yes*," said Birch, "except when it *rained* too hard."

"Oh, I *thought* of you that dreadful Thursday night," said the girl, compassionately. "I just wondered where you were when—when it thundered so. Don't you remember?"

A slow, shrewd, happy kind of smile crept all over David's face as he listened.

"Well, I want to know!" he said quietly, but with a queer note in his voice that somehow set Cynthia's heart beating a trifle faster. "You did, did ye? Why, I'll just tell you. I was on a stretch of road as bare as ever ye see, between Forkhill and Dewsbury. Not a critter or so much as a *barn* in sight! I was wet *through* and through!"

"Just *think* of it!" murmured Cynthia. "And—did you take cold?"

"Well, *no*. You see this open air life keeps you sorter well. *No*, I didn't take *cold*."

There was a pause, and David, shy for the first time in his life, said slowly—

"Guess *I* was thinkin' of you, Miss Jaye—mor'n once. There's a small girl down at my sister's has eyes uncommon like yours!"

The eyes in question were fixed gladly on David's honest brown face.

"Has she? How old's she?"

"'Bout fifteen, I guess."

"*Oh!*" Cynthia felt a twinge of disappointment. "Quite—grown up, then?"

Birch laughed.

"I'd like my sister Susan to hear you say that! Oh, no—they don't like to call it so——"

"*Cynthey!*" called a sharp voice. The girl started out of dreamland.

"Well, *good*-bye!" said David, springing into his waggon.

"Put that coffee down and get me some more raisins for this cider," said Miss Jerrer, when she returned. "I declare, Mis' Boucher let this work too long. *I* can't keep it sweet! An' if she thinks I'm goin' to encourage *hard* cider in a Prohibition town, she's about as mistaken as she *ever* was—an' that's sayin' a good deal of Mari Boucher!"

The fortnight passed as the previous one had for little Cynthia, whose pulses stirred quickly when the sky lowered, and the rains—heavier than usual that year—drenched and darkened the quiet country. She thought of the bare road between Forkhill and Dewsbury, and wondered if "he" was driving over it.

When the last days of November turned into a glorious Indian summer, her heart revelled. She could have laughed aloud on finding a new springing-forth of rose-leaves, tenderly green, on the bushes in her aunt's garden, which a week before had showed only red-tipped, bare branches. The chrysanthemums were glorious. Cynthia wondered if, at the houses along his route, he ever had people give him any, and she watched anxiously over one brilliant bush near the kitchen, and she determined he should have a bouquet from her the "next time."

The walk she took once or twice on baking days to "Kezi Hotchkisses'" for yeast "emptins" was fraught with new delights; for it was in that direction *he* drove after leaving her, and it was from that hill-top she could see the sweep of sky which flamed with the wintry sunsets, and drifted across what she used to call, in her fanciful way, the "sky world," in colours that were the poetry, the music of Cynthia's unlearned life.

How she would like to be riding along with "him," and watching these splendours of God! How much they could say to each other, the child used to think, about even the barest of the road-side trees or the gayest of the vari-coloured fields!

Stranger things are happening every day than for a girl of seventeen to divine a bond between a stranger and herself—to realise the "electric chain," and, without knowing it, to fall into love—and Paradise! And this is, of course, what happened to Cynthia in the weeks of that autumn and winter, while all the time Miss Jerrer was congratulating herself that Cynthia took no interest in young men—the spinster being opposed to them on principle, considering their evil ways and their words "false as their seeming." Many a discourse on the subject did Cynthia listen to, but with the sublime unconsciousness that the text could in any way apply to David Birch, whom she saw and talked to regularly on the days by which she "counted her time." Had the girl read that sweetest of all love sonnets, ignorant as she was, she would have understood it all, and could have as well said, "I count my times by times when I see you," as ever Shakespeare to his unknown love!

When the days had shrunk so that the lamps were trimmed and lighted by five o'clock, Cynthia knew that somewhere over the darkling country her "Tea-man" must be driving under the stars that were so beautiful in the winter sky, and would steal out upon the kitchen porch to look up at the glittering heavens, wondering if "he" had the same ideas she had as to how the stars grouped themselves. Not a notion had she of the science taught concerning any of these things she loved, but she could trace what she called "figures," and liked the way the Great Bear dipped down, and the evening star held glorious supremacy—like a "diamond," she called it to herself.

"Be ye moon-struck, child?" her aunt called out sharply, one crisp, cold night, as she found Cynthia in the little porch with uplifted eyes. That day she and David had talked, in their homely fashion, about the winter nights; and, while he admitted he liked to get indoors as early as possible such cold spells, he had entered thoroughly into her sentiments, and agreed to look out for the "diamond" star that very evening.

"Moon-struck!" laughed Cynthia, gaily, coming back to earth. "No, aunt, I guess not. I'm cold, though."

And she danced back into the little kitchen, and warmed her slim hands by the fire, while her pink cheeks glowed.

"That girl o' Jane's the *queerest!*" Miss Jerrer remarked to Mrs. Boucher the next day. "She don't care for a mortal thing like other girls, for all she's as smart as a trivet 'round the house, and as good-tempered! As for young men, I vow I b'lieve she'd sit all thro' meetin', and never know a male man was in the place! *I'm* glad on it, only it looks so queer in a pretty young thing like that!"

"Jerusalem crickets!" ejaculated Mr. Boucher from the fireside, and with a quizzical look at his wife. "Wish *I* was young once more'n I'd make her look around!"

"Oh, I guess you'd have enough to do!" said Mrs. Boucher, in the sarcastic tone habitual with her. "Sam, why don't you finish up your chores? That man'd *sit* and see the water-pail empty the hull day, and the scuttles wantin' fillin', and never know enough to tend to 'em!" she added, turning to her guest.

"That's all the good they be!" said Miss Jerrer.

Sam, dryly humorous, and enjoying his wife's henpecking, hugged himself together, and refilled his pipe.

"*I* say, what's the good of womenkind if they can't take care us of us?" he observed. "You don't suppose I married Mari for *looks?*" he added.

Mari's handsome, middle-aged face was flung away from him, as she made a step in the direction of the water-pail.

"I *say*, Mari," drawled Sam, "you put that down."

And presently his brawny figure was seen at the well, and Miss Jerrer, full of conjecture as to what Cynthia's indifference to "the male sex" meant, went on her way, across lots, home.

The conversation in Mrs. Boucher's kitchen being duly repeated to various people in the Hollow, a new interest in Miss Jerrer's niece, who was so implacable a maiden, was stirred, and at meeting nights there was a covert rivalry among the young men of the place as to who should attract most of her attention; but Cynthia smiled gently and impartially on all. No brilliancy of necktie, nor loudness of leading in the hymn, moved her to special interest, and, as a natural consequence, what had been pique at first deepened in some breasts to actual sentiment, so that, before the Tea-man had come twice more to the White Cottage, Cynthia Jaye was the cause of heartache, jealousies, and dissension.

No one in Beckett's Hollow ever took precedence of Kezia Hotchkiss in telling a neighbour what other people were saying about them; and accordingly, one crisp afternoon late in January, the stout-hearted widow walked down to Phœbe Jerrers, armed with a "mission of good." "Time had come for Phœbe to *know*," Kezia reflected, as she sat in the little parlour awaiting Miss Jerrer's return from a neighbour who had offered her a sample of new baking powder "to try."

Cynthia, seated opposite the vigorous and dreaded dame, was in an agony of mind. An invitation had come for her aunt and herself to spend a few weeks with a relative some miles away, and it *looked* as if her aunt meant to accept it! And David had been here only yesterday! He would not come for two weeks; he would find her gone, and then——

While Kezia talked about everybody in the parish, the girl was going over and over the things she and the Tea-man had said to each other. He had told her about his home—his sister Susan—how he had "worked his way up," and next spring was to buy a "share in the concern" and own the horse and waggon. "And s'pose, Miss Jaye," he had said, very confidentially, "I felt free to ask a girl to take me in hand for better or worse, *what* would you advise?"

"Oh, *anything*—everything!" faltered Cynthia, with her eyes on the bare rose-trees.

"Well, maybe you'd think over what advice you'd give, and tell me this day two weeks," he had said cheerfully. "Somehow, I'd rather have your views of the matter than anyone else's. Will you keep this in mind?"

Their eyes met now. The Tea-man's brown ones impelled Cynthia to turn her head, and look round.

"Will you keep it in mind, Cynthia?" he repeated.

The colour flamed crimson over the girl's downcast face. The sound of her name on his lips had made her feel faint.

"I mean she shall have time to *think*," David Birch said to himself, as he drove away; "then I'll call in on the old lady. If Cynthia says the word, she can oppose all she likes, but I've done wiser not to make my ideas known before. If all they say is true, I'd hev' spoiled the whole thing by calling outright on her."

And then David gave himself up to the happy dreaming he had of late indulged himself in.

Young as he was in years, his life—as he had already told Cynthia—had been, by force of circumstances, such as to mature him, and make him, "against nature," take a very serious view of things. Even if his cheery disposition chafed against it, he had to admit that his boyhood was spent in the discipline of poverty, on a nearly barren farm, which a spendthrift father had gone well nigh to ruin before he died, leaving David, at eighteen, the sole support of his mother, a widowed sister, and her little girl. The "working up" he had told Cynthia about had been very painfully, harshly slow, but it had been sure; and now ideals, cravings for a fireside, and domestic happiness of his own, long thrust aside, could take wing, and the first glimpse of Cynthia Jaye on the doorstep of the White Cottage, with her innocent blue eyes, full of an eager light, had touched a spark in the hope that burned now like a steady flame. He had found, before the month was out, that this girl, with her candid innocence, her sweet face, and evident interest in his coming, was on his mind, "in season and out"; and, had Cynthia been the most finished coquette, she could not have chanced upon a speech more calculated to enslave him than the innocently truthful one about her fears for him in the storm.

"Thought of me *when it thundered*, did she?" he had repeated to himself more than once on his homeward drive. *That* was the "stuff" to have in a wife! A girl that, sitting at home in the warmth and shelter, could think of the man she loved—chilled by the storm! Such a one would be ready for rain or shine in the life she shared with him!

David somehow had not failed to read signs of yielding on Cynthia's part, and, in the cosy little home he and Susan shared since the mother's death, he talked the matter over with his sister late one evening. If Cynthia said "Yes," then he meant to "hurry things along," for, from all he had heard, life at Miss Jerrer's was none too easy for the girl. Susan's faith in David's

judgment and good sense was absolute, and her sympathy was ready enough to please the most exacting lover. Brother and sister sat up late into the night, planning, talking about new things to be bought, what Cynthia would like, etc. etc.

"And do you know, Sue," said the young man at last, standing with his back to the fire, and a look half proud, half shamefaced on his honest face, "if—if all comes right, I've planned to get a week off and take a rig, and go for a drive all over with her. *That's* what would put sparkle in her eyes, I *tell* ye!"

Two weeks later a very cheerful-looking Tea-man drove along the Hollow road at a brisk pace. As he neared the White Cottage he coughed a trifle nervously, and took a hurried glance in the pocket mirror he carried.

Then suddenly a chill settled down upon him. The house was tightly barred and closed. What could it mean? He went round to the back door, tried it, examined the blinds—all with the same result. In a moment it occurred to him that a written word *might* be waiting for him at the Hollow post-office, and thither he drove at a rattling pace. The "man of destiny" behind the little window gravely shook his head.

"No, sir—nothing for Birch."

Then David found himself saying in a dull way—

"I see Miss Jerrer's house's shut up?"

"Why, yes," said the man, slowly. "I don't know where they're gone, but it's said her niece is to be married to a dominie somewhere's down the river."

David never quite knew how he finished his route that day. Several times he repeated to himself—"She's kept it in mind, as I asked her, poor little thing, and couldn't see her way to it!" But the idea of the dominie was agony.

Susan divined that things had gone awry on this day, which was to have been so joyous a home-coming for her brother; but, after he had briefly explained "It was a mistake on his part," she wisely forbore to question him further. Only, in the weeks that followed, the sight of his worn face—his forced attempts at cheerfulness—made her heart ache, and turn against the girl who had fooled him. One little action showed her more than words what he was bearing silently in his heart. He found Nelly, her girl, pulling to pieces a crisp spray of last year's bitter-sweet, and suddenly put out his hand to check her.

"Where'd you get that, Nell?" he asked, almost roughly.

"In your room; but I thought it was too dry to be good——"

"Give it to me, dear," he said, and, hurriedly gathering the broken bits, he went upstairs with them himself. They were the last of some branches Cynthia had shyly given him on one of those happy Tuesdays.

Meanwhile, in the primmest, dullest, dreariest of country houses a little girl was growing sadder, and paler, and heavier-hearted as the days went by. Cynthia had been at her Uncle George's nearly four weeks now. She *had* written a hurried, blotted, little scrawl to David, and mailed it herself, addressing "Care of the Great South Tea Co., Beckett'stown, N.Y.," and that no answer came had driven her to despair. When, acting on Kezia's suggestions, Miss Jerrer had speedily flown from the dangerous proximity of so many young men "after" Cynthia, the girl had hoped to be back in time; but the month had rolled by, and no word or sign of returning had been given. Every Tuesday her heart ached and throbbed anew. Where was he? What had he meant she was to "keep her mind on?" And then, crimson with shame, the girl felt sure she had mistaken him altogether. No doubt, he had only intended asking her advice.

"Matilda Morris wants you and Phœbe and Cynthy over there to-morrow," said Uncle George one evening at supper. "I can drive you as far as that, and call later. I have to go to Forkhill anyhow."

Forkhill! Cynthia's drooping head was lifted—her cheeks grew pink.

"What ails the girl?" thought Miss Jerrer. "Was she 'going' as Jane had—one of those slow wastin' kind o' declines?" More than once Miss Jerrer had asked herself the question.

On the drive next day, Cynthia, silent but eager, watched every bend in the road, noted every sign of thickening verdure, of opening space. They had passed Dewsbury—were on the way to Forkhill, and as yet no "bare stretch" was visible. Still there was a queer, half-painful, half-thrilled feeling in simply going over the road; and later in the day, on towards the afternoon, while the three elderly ladies were gossiping in the front-parlour, Cynthia stole softly upstairs to the best bedroom, put on her hat and cloak, shivering slightly at sight of her pale little face in the mirror—the heavy eyes, the depressed, young mouth. She would take the sad comfort of a walk up that road, for it was *Thursday*—his "Forkhill" day!

A chill wind had risen as Cynthia stole out of the house by the back way, and was soon speeding up the road. A quick gust of rain came down, dashing itself like tears against her pale face; but she walked on, looking at the fair uplands—the dwellings, scattered, it is true, but still not "bare" enough in any portion to be the place where, in the storm, there had been no one to shelter him. Then, like an odd coincidence—really not at all remarkable in a rainy month—the little patter changed to a genuine downpour. Cynthia thought just ahead of her she saw her uncle's carriage, and stood still, waiting for him to come up, her head a trifle downbent, her shawl drawn closely about her shrinking little figure.

"Helloa!" said somebody.

Cynthia raised her eyes in the rain.

"Is that you, David?" she said, feeling the tea-waggon, tree-tops, and rain all a confused blur, but somehow David's eyes and radiant smile clear to her.

"Well, if I *ever* saw the beat of this!" said David Birch, getting down from his seat, and taking hold of Cynthia gently by the shoulders. "Cynthia," he added, with his eyes fixed upon the spent, worn little face, "where've you been a-*hidin'?*"

"MAY I INTRODUCE MR. DAVID BIRCH?'"

"I *wasn't* hiding!" said Cynthia, beginning to cry. "You never answered my letter, and I'd thought about —just what you told me to!"

A quarter of an hour later, Cynthia, tucked up warmly at David's side, was driving along over the country she had so often travelled in her imagination. David contrived to hold the reins in one hand, while with the other he kept the little girl close to him. They were planning for that week's holiday so soon as it could be managed.

"We'll be along time enough to catch the first call of the robin," David said. "Many a time I've listened for it, all alone. *He* can't be cheated out of knowing his April time, even if there be snow on the ground."

Mrs. Morris, in her parlour window, shook her head as the tea-waggon drove up. She traded, "for a change," with "The Enterprise Co.," she observed, but a moment later exclaimed in surprise—

"Why, they're comin' in! That's Cynthy Jaye's been drivin' with him!"

Cynthia came in a trifle shyly, but her cheeks were pink, and her eyes sparkled.

"Aunt," she said quietly, "may I introduce Mr. David Birch? And we're—we're engaged! He was our Tea-man so long, you know!"

LUCY C. LILLIE.

IN PRAISE OF THE EARLY BIRD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOW TO BE HAPPY THOUGH MARRIED."

AFTER being abroad for some years one is particularly struck on returning to England with the lateness of the hours which it has become fashionable to keep. In London large shops are not opened until nine o'clock, an hour when in some countries a good part of the day's business has been done. If you come down at six or seven o'clock in your own house either the servants are not down or they look at you as if you were a very queer person and decidedly out of place. Indeed, you are in danger of being swept away with other rubbish by their brooms. If they do not exactly make it too hot for you they certainly do make it very dusty. And if it is inconvenient to get up early in one's own house it is positive misery for one who has become accustomed to early hours to stay in a strange house where late ones prevail. Of course late hours in the morning are almost necessitated by the late

hours that are kept at night. When people do not dine until half-past eight o clock they must go to bed at an hour which seems to those who would like to regulate their lives by reason to be much too late.

A curate in the North of England, who had become a clergyman in an inexpensive way, and whose father was a small farmer, was invited to dine and stay the night with his bishop. He arrived at the palace about five o'clock, and instead of the "high tea" he expected he got only some thin bread and butter with his tea. He could not help contrasting this meagre fare with the substantial tea his lordship would have been given if he had visited the curate's early home at the farm. At eight o'clock the gong sounded to dress for dinner. Though he would gladly have had a little more food, the simple clergyman, thinking that it was only right that in the house of a busy man like the bishop the hours should be early, undressed, and went to bed. When the dinner had been kept waiting for some time a servant was sent to see if the guest had been taken ill. The light in his room was out, and he was found asleep in bed. Was not this curate's notion as to the proper time for going to bed a more reasonable one than that of those who only begin their night's work or amusement at ten or eleven o'clock? How stupid it is for us to spoil our eyes by working with artificial light when we could avoid doing so at least in summer if we rose and went to bed with the sun. It is all a matter of habit. In a week's time we could get accustomed to, and could grow to like, rational hours as much as we do our present irrational ones.

The poet Thomson, who in the "Castle of Indolence" paid homage to his own lazy nature, being found in bed at a very late hour of the day, was asked why he did not get up. He answered, "Troth, man, I see nae motive for rising!" No motive for rising! Why, success and failure in life depend upon it to a very large extent. The celebrated Dr. Doddridge said that it was to his habit of early rising that the world was indebted for nearly the whole of his valuable works. Sir Thomas More, Bishop Burnet, and many other authors have said the same thing. Sir Walter Scott had always time to entertain his friends and appeared to live the leisurely life of a country gentleman, when turning out novels at the rate of one a month, because he worked three or four hours before breakfast. Some of the busiest public men have accounted for the fact that they seemed to have time for everything, and were never in a hurry, by saying that they were in the habit of "breaking the back" of the day's work before nine o'clock in the morning.

The celebrated writer, Archdeacon Paley, gives an interesting account of the circumstance that induced him, at college, to acquire the habit of early rising. "I spent," he says, "the first two years of my undergraduateship happily, but unprofitably. I was constantly in society, where we were not immoral, but idle and expensive. At the commencement of the third year, after having left the usual party at a late hour, I was awakened at five in the morning by one of my companions, who stood at my bedside and said, 'Paley, I have been thinking what a fool you are. I could do nothing, probably, if I were to try, and I could afford the indolent life you lead. You could do everything and cannot afford it. I have had no sleep during the whole night on account of these reflections, and am now come solemnly to inform you that if you persist in your indolence, I must renounce your society.' 'I was so struck,' says Paley, 'with the visit and the visitor, that I lay in bed the greater part of the day and formed my plan. I ordered my bed-maker to lay my fire every evening, in order that it might be lighted by myself. I arose at five, read during the whole day, took supper at nine, went to bed, and continued the practice up to this hour.'"

It has been calculated that the difference between rising at five and seven o'clock in the morning, for the space of forty years—supposing a man to go to bed at the same hour at night—is nearly equivalent to the addition of ten years to a man's life.

"No man," said Douglas Jerrold, "ever achieved anything in life without having got up at six o'clock every morning at some period of his life." He himself learned several languages by dint of early rising and hard work. Though I believe in early rising and practise it myself, I am not going to quote the proverb about the early bird catching the worm, for surely this proverb proves too much. If the bird were a gainer by its early habits, the opposite must be said of the worm. It lost its life by rising too soon. Nor can it be doubted that some early risers justify the criticism that they are conceited all the forenoon and stupid all the afternoon. They boast of getting up early, although they do not put the hours they have rescued from bed to any good account, and they are often stupid and unfit for business as the day advances, because they have deprived themselves of some portion of the sleep they required. As regards the proper hour for getting up in the morning, those who may be considered good authorities are not agreed. It depends to a large extent upon health, temperament, and employment; but we may be sure that the earlier the hours we keep the better it is for us. Some one remarked to the Duke of Wellington, on seeing his little camp bed, that it was almost too narrow to turn upon.

"When one turns in bed," replied his Grace, "it is time to turn out." More vague—but perhaps more agreeable to the taste of most of us—was the opinion of another celebrity who lived to an advanced age. He thought that a man ought always to lie in bed until he were "done." Six hours good sleep ought to "do" a healthy young man. I say "good sleep," for it should be measured by quality as well as by quantity, and one person may sleep more in one hour than another in three, though the latter sleep all the time. The healthy and normal condition of things is described by the old saying, "Six hours for a man, seven for a woman, and eight for a fool." Some of us may have to admit that we are foolish enough to require the last-mentioned allowance, but there can be no doubt that, besides wasting time, excessive sleep injures the brain and general health.

If it be the case, as I saw it stated in the papers

some time ago, that the Prince of Wales is trying to make an earlier dinner hour fashionable, it is a much-needed reform. I believe that the late hours at which the Houses of Parliament sit are arranged for the convenience of members who are engaged during the day in the law courts and in other places of business, but why cannot business begin at seven o'clock in the morning instead of at nine or ten? The change would put everything into confusion, but only for about a week, and then we should settle down to the new fashion, or rather to the old one revived. Our eyes and general health would be benefited by the change, and, if we should not be able to work harder, at least we should work in more natural conditions.

SOME ANIMAL THIEVES.

BY ALEXANDER H. JAPP, LL.D.

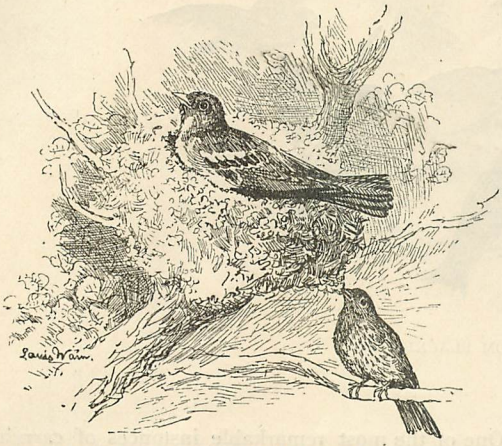
HIVE-BEES PAYING A VISIT TO HUMBLE-BEES.

THIEVERY in nature is widely extended. Whole classes of animals prey on other classes for food; whole families are parasitic, and gradually weaken and destroy those on which they feed. Life is so widely diffused, so omnipresent, that the further science carries its searching light, the more it reveals the fact of mutual destruction. The Laureate sings of "Nature red in tooth and claw," and this is but a figure for a grand truth that seems hardly to admit of exception. In this long roll of thievery, man himself forms no exception; for, apart from moral and casuistic reasonings, it is found that neither in the savage state nor in the civilised can he subsist without doing despite to life, which from necessity he destroys, but which by no art can he create.

But it is not with the general and necessary laws of existence that we are now to concern ourselves, but rather with some special and exceptional instances where the ingenuity, the adaptation of means to ends, is so exceptional and striking as to ensure immediate interest, and to excite surprise and wonder. And first as to insects.

Huber relates an anecdote of some hive-bees paying a visit to a nest of humble-bees, placed in a box not far from their hive, in order to steal or beg the honey, which places in a strong light the good temper of the latter. This happened in a time of scarcity. The hive-bees, after pillaging, had taken almost entire possession of the nest. Some humble-bees, which remained in spite of this disaster, went out to collect provisions, and bringing home the surplus after they had supplied their own immediate necessities, the hive-bees followed them, and did not quit them until they had obtained the fruit of their labours. They

licked them, presented to them their proboscis, surrounded them, and thus at last persuaded them to part with the contents of their honey-bags. The humble-bees did them no harm, and never once showed their stings, so that it seems to have been persuasion rather than force that produced this singular instance of self-



BIRD THIEVING FROM ANOTHER'S NEST.

denial. This remarkable manœuvre was practised for more than three weeks, when the wasps being attracted by the same cause, the humble-bees entirely forsook the nest.

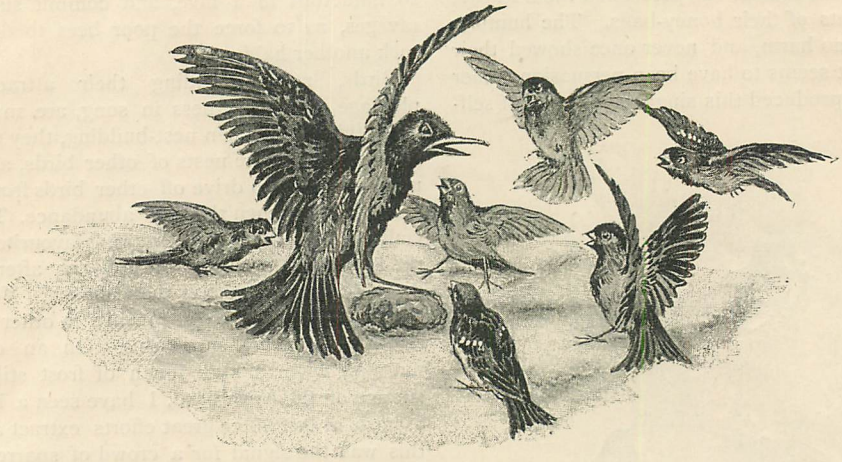
Kuhn, the great German naturalist, informs us that in the year 1799 some monks who kept bees, observing that they made an unusual noise, lifted up the hive, when an animal flew out, which, to their great surprise, no doubt, for they at first took it for a bat, proved to be the Death's-head Hawk Moth (*Acherontia atropos*), and he remembers that several, some years before, had been found dead in the bee-houses. Huber also, in 1804, discovered that it made its way into his hives and those of his vicinity and had robbed them of their honey. In Africa, we are told, it has the same propensity, which the Hottentots observing, in order to monopolise the honey of the wild bees, have persuaded the colonists that it inflicts a mortal wound. This moth has the faculty of emitting a remarkable sound, which Huber supposes may produce an effect on the bees of a hive, somewhat similar to that produced by the voice of their queen. As soon as uttered, this strikes them motionless, and then the moth is enabled to commit with impunity such devastation in the midst of myriads of armed bands.

The larvæ of two species of moth (*Galleria*) exhibit equal hardihood with equal impunity. They indeed pass the whole of their initiatory state in the midst of the combs. Yet in spite of the stings of the bees of a whole republic, they continue their depredations unmolested, sheltering themselves in tubes made of grains of wax, and lined with silken tapestry, spun and woven by themselves. This the bees (however disposed they may be to revenge the mischief which they do them by devouring what to all other animals would be indigestible, their wax) are unable to penetrate. These larvæ are sometimes so numerous in a hive, and commit such extensive ravages, as to force the poor bees to desert it, and seek another habitation.

Birds, notwithstanding their attractiveness in plumage and sweetness in song, are many of them great thieves. When nest-building, they will steal the feathers out of the nests of other birds, and are often much inclined to drive off other birds from a feeding-ground even when there is abundance. This is especially true of one of our greatest favourites, the robin red-breast, who will peck and run after and drive away birds much bigger than himself. Very different as the robin and the sparrow are in other things, they resemble each other in this. On an early spring morning, when a little touch of frost still made the surface of the earth hard, I have seen a blackbird on a lawn at last after great efforts extract a worm, and this was the signal for a crowd of sparrows, who, by dint of numbers, managed to drive away the blackbird and carry off the worm, to feed their own young ones, no doubt.

But the stealing of nest-building material, or of worms, is not nearly so surprising as the stealing of nests themselves. In a sense, of course, the cuckoo steals the use of the nest of another bird, when she deposits in it her own egg, and steals or procures under false pretences the services of a foster-mother for an intruder; but that is not what we now mean. It is a common thing for the sparrows, when there is a prospect of a mild autumn, to save themselves time and trouble in the building of a nest for a late brood, and to drive other birds from the nest they have built and still inhabit. Sometimes even the swallow is a sufferer in this way. A very striking scene of war and theft was brought under our own observation two years ago. We were sitting in an arbour in a country garden, when our eye was caught by a gathering of birds flying about the branches of a lofty sycamore-tree, which almost swept over the top of the chimney of a disused back kitchen. In that chimney we knew that swallows had built. The noise of fluttering about the branch

BUCKLAND'S RAT.



SPARROWS STEALING FROM BLACKBIRD.

told of unwonted excitement, and caused us to watch closely. At length, as it were, on a given signal, the sparrows made an assault on the swallows in their nests ; two of the luckless birds were thrown right down the chimney, where, on speedily going in, I found them caught, took them in my hand, to hear that peculiar kind of thick hissing sound which they make when frightened. After observing them a little, I let them off, when they disappeared out of view and did not return. The nests were utilised by the sparrows, who successfully reared a third brood in the chimney where the swallows had been.

Readers of Frank Buckland's most delightful books will remember that nothing pleased him more than to observe the different and delightful ways in which his pets would thieve. He would sometimes even tempt them to steal just to see how clever they could be in doing it. He tells one delicious story about his favourite Jemmy, the suricate, and another about a pet rat which he had, and which not unfrequently terrified his visitors at breakfast. He had made a house for the pet rat just by the side of the mantel-piece, and this was approached by a kind of ladder, up which the rat had to climb when he had ventured down to the floor. Some kinds of fish the rat particularly liked, and was sure to come out if the savour was strong. One day, Mr. Buckland turned his back to give the rat a chance of seizing the coveted morsel, which he was not long in doing, and in running up his ladder with it ; but he had fixed it by the middle of the back, and the door of the entrance was too narrow to admit of its being drawn in thus. But Mr. Rat was equal to the emergency. In a moment he bethought himself, laid the fish on the small platform before the door, and then entering his house, he put out his mouth, took the fish by the nose, and thus pulled it in and made a meal of it. Never after this did he attempt to drag in such a morsel carried longways, though Mr. Buckland often tried him. They are wonderfully cunning.

One of the most remarkable instances of carrying on a career of theft came under our own observation. A friend in north-east Essex had a very nice Aberdeenshire terrier, a female, and a very affectionate relationship sprang up between this dog and a tom-cat. The cat followed the dog with the utmost fondness, purring and running against it, and would come and call at the door for the dog to come out. Attention was first drawn to the pair by this circumstance. One evening we were visiting our friend, and heard the cat about the door calling, and someone said to our friend that the cat was noisy. " He wants little Dell," said he —that being the dog's name ; we looked incredulous. " Well, you shall see," said he, and, opening the door, he let the terrier out. At once the cat bounded to-

TOM'S WILD KITTENS.

wards her, fawned round her, and then, followed by the dog, ran about the lawn. But a change came. Some kittens were brought to the house, and the terrier

got much attached to them, and they to her. The tom-cat became neglected, and soon appeared to feel it. By and by, to the surprise of everyone, the tom somehow managed to get, and to establish in the hedge of the garden, two wild kittens, fiery, spitting little things, and carried on no end of depredations on their account. Chickens went; the fur and remains of little rabbits, for which he perseveringly hunted, were often found round the nest, and pieces of meat disappeared from kitchen and larder. Our friend could not find it in his heart to shoot the tom; and this went on for some time, when suddenly the cat disappeared—had been shot in a wood near-by, by a gamekeeper, when hunting to provide for these wild little things, which were allowed to live in the hedge as they kept down the mice in the garden; but first one was shot, and then another, in following their foster-parent's taste for hunting and killing rabbits and game in the wood.

This was a case of animal thieving for a loftier purpose than generally obtains, mere demand for food or other necessity. That animals always act under imperious instinct, it would appear is hardly true, unless we allow to the term instinct a meaning not commonly associated with it. Animals certainly do develop strange traits in association with man.

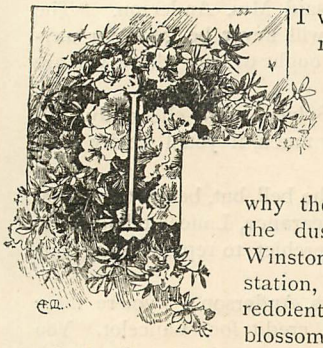
"YOU'LL LOVE ME YET."

By FRANCES HASWELL.

"You'll love me yet, and I can tarry
Your love's protracted growing;
June reared the bunch of flowers you carry
From seeds of April's sowing."—Browning.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

A KNIGHT OF ARTHUR'S COURT.



It was a warm summer afternoon, and the garden of Elderwood House resounded with a merry Babel of children's voices. There was no very apparent reason why the square house, fronting the dusty road that led from Winston village to the railway station, should bear a name so redolent of cool woodland and blossoming trees, but it had received that title years before Mrs. Hornby came to live there, with her four boys and five daughters. The garden was a large but not a very picturesque one; it had no sort of mystery about it, no bosky seclusion, no winding walks over-arched by flowering boughs; there were, in fact, no trees at all, except a belt of poplars, which divided it from the adjoining grounds of Winston Lodge—Winston being a place of "villa residences." The road was shut out, however, by a high brick wall; and there was a wide lawn—not very well kept, or rather, not kept at all—where the boys played cricket; a thicket of gooseberry bushes beyond the lawn; a strawberry bed, which had gained the undeserved reputation of being unproductive, because the children always gathered most of the berries before they were ripe; and a thriving plantation of rhubarb, adapted to the needs of a large family.

"Sylvia!" cried someone, in a high key; for no voice that was not raised to something like its utmost pitch had much chance of commanding attention at Elderwood.

In response to the call, a head was raised from the midst of the gooseberry bushes. The voice came from the drawing-room window, where a tall girl was standing, shading her eyes from the afternoon sun. Meanwhile, the young person who answered to the romantic name of Sylvia was seen crossing the sloping lawn towards the house.

"What is it, Ethel?"

"Mother wants us to make some calls."

"Calls? Oh dear! I don't feel a bit like making calls to-day. It's so hot, and I'm so untidy and dishevelled." (She had just taken off her large shady hat, thereby exposing to view a mass of light hair, which quite justified those adjectives.) "The children were so troublesome at lessons this morning, and they made me so awfully cross that I haven't recovered my temper yet. I shan't find it again all day. And I haven't got half enough gooseberries for the puddings; they're so wretchedly small."

"Yes; but, Sylvia, mother has these calls on her mind, and she won't be happy till they are made. Run and dress, like a good girl."

"But just look at my poor hands, scratched all over, and bleeding!"

"Do you not mean to wear any gloves?"

"I haven't a respectable pair of gloves in the world. Letty borrowed my tan ones last Sunday, and never brought them back again—though she declares she *did*, which is adding insult to injury; and my grey gloves are all out at the finger ends."

"You'll have to mend them, then; or you can give them to mother to mend while you change your frock."

"I don't know what to put on," said Sylvia, resolutely taking the most doleful view of the situation.

"Put on your grey beige."

"It's torn—but I suppose there's nothing else I can wear. I *must* keep my white frock clean for Mrs. Ayton's garden party. So I'll just run the tear together, and cover up those ink-marks in front with my new jacket."

Sylvia, who was not in the habit of dawdling before the looking-glass, came downstairs in a quarter of an hour, ready, after a fashion—though, it must be confessed, there was a want of finish about the details of her toilet which considerably tried the elder sister.

Mrs. Hornby and Ethel together charitably added a few adjusting touches, and the two maidens set forth together on their round of visits.

"I hope we shall find nobody at home," was Sylvia's first remark.

"I thought you liked visiting."

"Oh, I never know what to say to people in these formal calls. And if everybody is out, we shall be able to *do* all our calls at once, which will be an immense relief to mother's anxious mind."

Mrs. Peacock and Mrs. Surtees were out. So far, so good; and, as the sisters walked up the shady avenue of the Manor House, Sylvia observed exultantly—

"Mrs. Anderson always goes out driving on fine afternoons, Ethel."

"Don't wish that. If we find everybody out, we shall collect no gossip to amuse our invalid."

"I don't think we are likely to glean much amusement, or instruction either, from Mrs. Anderson. Though, to be sure, exceptional dulness, exceptionally well described, can sometimes be made amusing."

Sylvia's prophecy concerning Mrs. Anderson's movements did not come true, and they were ushered into the large, unused-looking drawing-room, "for all the world like an hotel sitting-room," as Sylvia remarked. Their hostess came in almost immediately, brimful of welcome—so delighted to see Miss Hornby and Miss Sylvia—so anxious to know exactly how Mrs. Hornby was—so well contented with the fine weather. As soon as these topics had been exhaustively discussed, she rang the bell.

"Please bring some tea. And you might go into the garden, and tell Mr. Bassett I want him."

"We have a nephew of my husband's staying with us," she explained, turning once more to her guests: "Lancelot is his name—Lancelot Bassett. I want him to get to know people; it would do him good to mix a little in society, poor boy! Not that he's poor, by any means, in the common sense of the word; but he has always led such a quiet, dull life. He was an only son, you see. My brother-in-law died when Lancelot was quite a baby, and his mother, who was something of an invalid, never could make up her mind to part with him, even to go to school."

"How very interesting to meet a man called Lancelot in real life," said Sylvia, looking forward, rather unreasonably, to the entrance of a hero of romance. She was proportionately disappointed when "a very raw boy"—as Ethel afterwards described him to Mrs. Hornby—appeared at the open French window. The tailor and hair-cutter of the small country town near which he lived had done little to add to his good looks; which perhaps was one reason why, though tall, he did not look his height. Nor did he look his age, for the incipient moustache was almost too blonde to be noticeable.

Sylvia was so bitterly disappointed in this Knight of the Table Round that she felt no inclination to exert herself to entertain him. Ethel politely inquired whether he had been long at Winston, and how he liked the neighbourhood; and then, somewhat to her relief—as he did not seem to have much small talk at command—the maid re-appeared with the tea-tray.

"Bestir yourself, Lancelot!" said Mrs. Anderson. "Hand these cups to the ladies."

The young man obeyed, but, in his commendable eagerness to show proper attention to his aunt's visitors, he tripped over a footstool, spilling a whole cup of strong tea over Sylvia's much-enduring Sunday gown.

"Oh, Miss Hornby!" cried he, with unaffected concern, "what have I done? I hope you're not scalded!"

"Not a bit," said Sylvia. But she could not help looking rather ruefully at the front breadth of the poor grey beige.

"You careless boy!" said Mrs. Anderson. "The dress is quite spoiled; it will never be good for anything again! You really ought to look where you are going."

"Never mind," said Sylvia, more cheerfully. "I don't suppose it will show much, if you'll kindly send for a cloth to mop it up."

Mrs. Anderson rang the bell, but, before the housemaid could make her appearance, Lancelot had set to work with his own handkerchief to repair damages as far as possible.

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Anderson; "you're more gallant than I gave you credit for, Lancelot. You two would really make a pretty picture—the young man on his knees, and the young lady bending over him!"

Sylvia coloured slightly; she thought Mrs. Anderson's remark in very bad taste, and disliked "being made such a fuss of," as she expressed it to herself.

"Please take no more trouble," she said. "The dress is just about dry now, and this is not its first accident, nor its second, either."

Mr. Bassett still looked apologetic, but no more could be done, and the conversation ebbed away to other subjects. When tea was over, Mrs. Anderson suggested that her nephew should take the girls to see the greenhouse.

"You'll find Mr. Anderson somewhere about, and I'll join you myself presently."

Sylvia gave an appealing glance at Ethel.

"Don't you think we ought to be going home?"

"Having got our tea? Oh, there's no hurry. Mother won't be expecting us yet."

And Mrs. Anderson whispered to Sylvia—

"Do, my dear, try to draw Lancelot out; get him to talk. He has plenty to say, I assure you, though he's quiet in company."

So the three young people filed out through the French window from the cool drawing-room into the blaze of the afternoon sun. It was easier to make conversation here than indoors. The girls asked the names of one plant after another, perceiving that their companion was glad to find something he could give them information about.

"My mother was a great florist," he said; "that's how I come to be so learned in these matters. I've a large garden at home."

"'*Was* a great florist.' She must be dead, then," thought Sylvia.

There was an indefinable something in his tone which touched her, and she began to feel a kindly interest in him.

"Where is your home?" she asked.

"Near Welford. An old red brick house, with blue clematis climbing over it. I'm rather proud of the garden and panelled rooms."

"That sounds charming!" cried Sylvia. "Have you fruit as well as flowers?"

"Far more fruit than we can use: apricots, peaches, plums, strawberries——"

"Delicious! Oh dear! you do make me envious. Our garden is a good size, but, so far as fruit is concerned, it's a case of too many children with us at Elderwood."

"There, you make me envious in my turn, because I've been regretting all my life that I had no brothers or sisters."

Mrs. Anderson now entered the greenhouse, and, while she was showing Ethel one or two new acquisitions in the shape of foreign ferns, Mr. Bassett took the opportunity to say to Sylvia, in an undertone—

"I feel as if I hadn't apologised half humbly enough for my awkwardness, Miss Hornby—you are Miss Hornby, aren't you? My aunt introduced your sister and yourself under the joint title of the Misses Hornby."

"No; my sister is Miss Hornby. My name is Sylvia."

"That sounds like a name in a poem."

"You mustn't make fun of my name, because your own is just as bad—or just as good, whichever way we please to put it."

The young man smiled. The ice was quite broken.

"Parents take a serious responsibility when they give children such names, don't they? People expect to find me a hero, and then they are disappointed."

Sylvia could not help laughing.

"I must say I did feel greatly interested in you, when Mrs. Anderson told us your name was Lancelot."

"And when you saw me the interest vanished?"

"I've no means of judging whether you are a hero or not," replied Sylvia, evading the question.

"But you know the poetical Lancelot was a model of courtesy; and I'm afraid he never threw cups of tea over the dresses of the ladies at King Arthur's Court."

"No, I suppose not; if he upset anything, it must have been wine."

"But in sober earnest, Miss Sylvia, you can't think how angry I am with my own clumsiness. You'll never be able to wear that pretty dress any more. I'm afraid the stain will always show—it's right in front."

"I never cry long over spilt milk—or rather, spilt tea—and you needn't think I shall leave off wearing the dress. We're not a family who can afford to give up clothes before they are worn out; there are nine of us, you see, and we haven't too much money to begin with. I generally tear my frocks the first time I put them on, in flying upstairs or rushing through doors. I believe there's a fate about it."

"We always find a comfort in laying our misfortunes on the fates, don't we?"

"Well, yes; but, oh! I wish I was clever at altering and re-making, like my cousin, Angela Daubeny. I've no patience for that kind of work, and I couldn't make anything of it, even if I tried. If I was rich, I would keep a maid with a great deal of taste, and have myself prettily dressed without any thought or trouble of my own."

At this moment Mrs. Anderson and Ethel came round from the opposite side of the greenhouse; and Ethel, catching the words "If I was rich," launched a glance of reproof and warning at the injudicious Sylvia, who forthwith became silent. She stood somewhat in awe of her elder sister, and felt guilty of having been too confidential with a stranger; it was a relief, therefore, when Ethel presently held out her hand to Mrs. Anderson, saying—

"We must really go now."

But Mr. Bassett, who perhaps did not find his aunt's society particularly congenial, announced that he had business in the village, and would walk along so far with the Miss Hornbys, if he might.

"I think my aunt said you lived in Winston?" he said, as they went down the drive.

"Not exactly," said Ethel; "we are half a mile on the other side of the village."

"Is it the white house with the privet hedge?"

"No; the next one," said Sylvia: "the one with ELDERWOOD painted on the gate, and a flock of children always rushing about the garden, except at lesson-time."

"And when is lesson-time?"

"From ten to twelve every morning, and another hour in the afternoon. I'm governess, you must know, and I always maintain three hours are quite enough for any child; but mother thinks our school time contemptibly short."

"Your house must be the one with a high wall shutting off the road. Perhaps that's the reason I saw no children when I passed, though it wasn't lesson-time, Miss Sylvia."

"And you saw no one walking on the wall? and you didn't hear any noise?"

"Not that I remember."

"I can only say it's a mystery!"

Just outside the Manor gates they met a young lady, rather pretty, and very stylishly dressed, with whom the two sisters exchanged a familiar greeting.

"That's the cousin Angela I was telling you about," observed Sylvia, almost before the said Angela was out of earshot.

"Indeed!" said Lancelot. "I shall soon know all the places and people hereabouts. I've learned most of the names and some of the family histories already —from my good aunt."

So soon as Mr. Bassett had taken leave of the sisters at the corner of the road leading to the village, Ethel thought it her duty to read Sylvia a lecture.

"Sylvia," she said, "whatever have you been talking about to this new friend of yours?"

"Nothing particular. We haven't had much time for talk."

"You seem to have found time to tell him we were poor."

"Yes; why not?"

"You have no proper pride, Sylvia."

"I don't know that. Pride takes different forms; perhaps mine takes the form of not being ashamed of poverty. Poverty's no disgrace."

"Certainly not. But it's bad taste to obtrude it on other people's attention."

"I didn't obtrude it. Mr. Bassett apologised for spoiling my frock, and said he feared I could never wear it again. Of course I ought to have told him it was of no consequence, for that in our family we never wore clothes more than a week, and then gave them away to the maids!"

"Don't talk nonsense, Sylvia!"

"And I suppose I ought not to have let him know what a large family we were? I saw you give me a withering glance when I mentioned our unfortunate brothers and sisters."

"Our domestic affairs can't be particularly interesting to a total stranger, I should imagine."

"But one must talk about something, and what is one to say? I didn't like to let conversation drop, and it's so insipid to confine one's self entirely to nice safe subjects like the weather."

"How far did you get in the family history? I gathered that you had been giving your friend some information about Angela."

"I did mention Angela: that was all. But I don't quite know why you should call Mr. Bassett *my* friend. My acquaintance with him is neither more nor less than your own."

"I thought you seemed to find his company congenial. I rather wondered at your taste, I must say."

"He doesn't look like a knight-errant, certainly," said Sylvia, smiling as she recalled her disappointment at the first introduction. "But he seems a very good-natured boy, and he couldn't be penitent enough about that cup of tea."

"It was ill-bred of him to make such a fuss about it. And it's all very well to call him a boy; but what age do you take him for?"

"Oh, I don't know! Perhaps nineteen."

"More likely twenty-five."

"Oh, Ethel! Mr. Lowndes is only twenty-five, and he looks like a man of the world."

"The hobbledehoy stage lasts a long time with some people. I believe cases have been known where it has lasted all through life, while other men never go through that trying phase at all. I don't suppose Mr. Lowndes ever did."

"Well, *I'm* not so fond of your Mr. Lowndes—or Angela's Mr. Lowndes, I should say; he seems to be always sneering at one. I shrink into nothing before that critical glass of his."

And they turned in at Elderwood gate.

A day or two after came a parcel for Sylvia, and it happened on this wise: the two girls were at the breakfast table, hard at work cutting bread and butter, when the letters were brought in, among them a large brown paper parcel, rather longer than it was broad; there was a general rush to read the address, and a chorus of voices proclaimed—

"Sylvia, it's for you!"

As it was not very often that Miss Sylvia received either parcel or letter, this was an exciting event, in its way, all the more so as it was impossible to conjecture what the parcel might contain; and she felt inclined to prolong the pleasant suspense till after she had carried her mother's breakfast-tray upstairs, and so could have a mind perfectly at leisure.

Letty was anxious to have it opened out for her by the time she returned. One of the boys unkindly suggested that the inscription might be a mistake, and that the parcel was intended for mother; but Sylvia held firm to her resolve: the parcel was not to be tampered with. The auspicious moment at last arrived; the string was cut, for Sylvia never had patience to untie a knot; the brown folds were removed, and were found to enclose an inner covering of white tissue-paper. Another instant, and the mystery was mysterious no longer; the white paper covered a length of silk. Sylvia looked perplexed; it must, after all, be some mistake; she felt a little crestfallen. Ethel examined it critically.

"This is very good silk," she said; "and what a soft delicate colour! I don't know what to call it exactly —pale blue, *very* pale—or lavender."

Once more they looked at the address; nothing could be less ambiguous: "Miss Sylvia Hornby, Elderwood, Winston." What did it mean?

"There's more than enough for a gown here," said Ethel; and then an idea flashed across her.

"I have it, Sylvia: your new friend!"

"Who do you mean?"

"Why, who poured the tea over your grey beige the other day."

"Oh, Ethel, how unlikely! I'm sure he's forgotten the whole thing by this time; besides, it would be out of all reason: this silk is worth ten times that old beige. Isn't it a lovely colour, though? I only wish it *was* mine. I wish I could take it and wear it with a good conscience.'

"Remember the cask of American apples last

Christmas," put in Michael, "which we thought was for us, and, when the apples were nearly all gone, we found it was a mistake, and they should have gone to Mrs. Surtees."

This painful reminiscence made Sylvia look grave; she carried off her parcel to consult "Mother," by whose advice it was relegated for the present to the honourable obscurity of the "best bedroom."

"We shall soon find out where it came from, I've no doubt," said Mrs. Hornby.

But at the bottom of Sylvia's heart very strong suspicions lurked. She felt, in fact, that kind of certainty which we often have when we can give no adequate reason for it, that Ethel's explanation was the true one. She carefully avoided saying so, however, for she might, after all, be wrong; and brothers are so fond of teasing. And it was not long, as her mother had predicted, before light was thrown on the problem.

"LANCELOT HAD SET TO WORK TO REPAIR DAMAGES" (*p.* 30).

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

CONFIDENCES.

WINSTON was not a specially hospitable place. Its inhabitants thought twice or thrice before embarking on so hazardous an enterprise as a party, but summer was the easiest time for "doing" their friends, and tennis-parties were the favourite form of entertainment. Ethel and Sylvia had an invitation of long standing to Winston Court on the Saturday following the parcel episode; it was the first tennis-party of the season, and

Sylvia was proportionately excited. The night before the party, as the two girls were brushing their hair in their own room, Sylvia suddenly flung herself on her bed, and exclaimed, with a long-drawn sigh—

"Oh, Ethel! I wish I wasn't so obscure!"

"Whatever do you mean, child?"

"I mean just what I say: I don't like being so obscure!"

"But I don't understand what you mean by 'obscure.'"

"Socially obscure, Ethel," said Sylvia, with emphasis. "Never was anybody so obscure as I. No one cares to sit with me or talk to me at parties, unless it be the dullest of the dull. It's humiliating. I sometimes feel as if *everybody* must be noticing how neglected I am."

"Don't trouble yourself on that score. You may feel comfortably sure that no one notices either of us, for good or ill, for I'm every bit as obscure as you, if you can find any consolation in that."

"*No.* You never went into supper at a party all by yourself. I really don't think your case is quite so pitiable as mine. How do you account for this painful state of things, Ethel?"

"Oh, I don't know. We're not attractive enough, I suppose. We can but do our best to make ourselves more agreeable."

"I can't do more than I *do* do," said Sylvia. "When I first went to parties, I thought perhaps my obscurity was only the obscurity of a beginner, and I've been hoping against hope for years that things might mend, but I see no signs of a change for the better."

"For years, Sylvia?"

"Yes, *for years.* Ever since that picnic to Allerton Abbey, when I was seventeen."

"That's only two years."

"Never mind that. I want you to tell me honestly: is it that I'm so much plainer than other girls, and shabbier, or stupider? or what?"

Ethel stood fixed in thought, with suspended hairbrush. The question propounded had often exercised her own mind in one form or another, though, being of a more reserved and self-contained nature than Sylvia, she had never put it into words. She had even formed a theory on the subject—a theory which she found a little difficulty in formulating. While she remained silent, Sylvia went on—

"You mightn't think it, but really I take *immense* pains to invent interesting conversation. I rake up every subject under the sun, and many a time I flatter myself I've said very amusing things to people. And then I look at their faces, and see them utterly blank and sheep-like. I suppose my wit is too keen for Winston; perhaps"—she added, with a magnificent gesture—"the day may come when I shall get into a different circle, and find myself appreciated."

"It's curious, Sylvia, why some girls get so much attention, and others so little. I've often wondered about it, and I've come to the conclusion that it's a fate—a gift—whatever you please to call it. There's the matter in a nutshell. We can't explain it."

"But if that is so, there's no hope of our ever escaping from obscurity, Ethel," said the younger sister dolefully.

Ethel shook her head.

"I'm afraid not, my dear. Either a woman has the mysterious gift, or she has it not; it can't be acquired."

"But, Ethel, that's not what books say. Don't we always read of women making conquests by beauty or wit?"

"Never mind what books say. Just look round, and judge for yourself. See which women are most popular—with men, I mean—and see whether they are so much handsomer or cleverer than the rest."

"Let me think. There's Angela—she's one of the popular kind; but then she really *is* pretty, and beautifully dressed!"

"But look at the Fulton girls!"

"I don't know about them," said Sylvia reflectively. "They're quite as nice-looking as Angela, and much better company, and yet they are nearly as obscure as ourselves."

"You see, we can't reason on the thing. There it is: it's a fact."

"'All that we know is, nothing can be known,'"

quoted Sylvia.

"I suppose, if one could choose, one would like to have this gift of fascination," continued Ethel; "but as the grapes are utterly out of reach, I prefer to think them sour; and honestly, I very much doubt whether these particular grapes add much to a woman's happiness."

"*I* think they do—very much indeed."

Ethel shook her head with an air of great wisdom.

"They are too intoxicating, and you see they are the kind that wither as the years go on; so that I always fancy people who have drunk deep of them must find the latter part of life rather empty and bitter."

Sylvia turned over her sister's theory in her mind.

"Poets say Helen of Troy was the most beautiful of women, but I suppose *you* would say she merely possessed this gift of fascination. And Cleopatra the same."

"Not a doubt of it. I dare say, if we could see Helen and Cleopatra, we should think them nothing particular."

And so the subject dropped. But as the sisters walked down the hill to Winston Court next day, Sylvia said—

"You'll be glad to hear, Ethel, that I've hardened my heart. I'm going to make the best of fortune, and enjoy myself this afternoon, in spite of obscurity."

The Hornby girls were almost the first to appear on the scene of action, for Sylvia always insisted on going early to parties, in order to make the most of her rare opportunities. The sun shone, the musicians were tuning up their instruments, the hostess was gracious, and there was such a pleasant sense of expectation in the air, that Sylvia, in spite of her sister's philosophy, felt as if the tide of social success might be about to

turn. The other guests soon began to assemble; most of them were familiar neighbours; but Mrs. Ayton introduced the Hornby girls to some strangers, two brothers and a sister, of the name of Pendlebury, who seemed agreeable enough.

"They're new to Winston," said Sylvia to herself, "and haven't learned to despise us yet. They haven't discovered how obscure we are. Let's hope they won't have time to find it out to-day."

At all hazards, she was determined not to be dull and silent; so she talked and smiled, enlarged on the fine weather, the virtues of the game of tennis, and the beauties of the neighbourhood, keeping on safe every-day topics; for unpleasant experience had taught her the danger of venturing further afield. She got on so well that she began to feel elated. She glanced at her sister. Ethel was really looking very nice in her white gown and white hat with yellow daisies in it, and surely she might hope that her own costume, which was almost a fac-simile of Ethel's, was equally becoming. But, alas! when Cousin Angela came up to them in a beautifully fitting terra-cotta gown and a most *recherché* hat, a consciousness of dowdiness and commonplace descended on poor Sylvia, like a sudden east wind, chilling into ice her little stream of talk. She would not yield without a struggle; she strove against the benumbing sense of her own insignificance, but in vain; she could no longer find anything to say, or if she did think of anything she felt sure no one would care to listen to it. There began to be awkward pauses in the conversation.

"It's unbearably hot!" said Sylvia's *bête-noir*, Mr. Lowndes, sauntering up to the little group.

"I didn't know *you* could ever feel warm about anything," said Sylvia to herself.

"Shall we go into that summer-house?" suggested Angela; "we can watch the play from there."

So they all ensconced themselves under the thatched roof of the rustic arbour, from which point of vantage they could watch not only the arena, but the new arrivals.

"Sylvia," said Ethel aside, "if Mr. Bassett comes, you must find out whether he sent the silk dress."

Hardly were the words spoken when, through a gap in the evergreens, the portly figure of Mrs. Anderson, resplendent in stiff black silk, became visible, closely followed by her nephew.

"Talk of the angels, and you hear the rustling of their wings," said Ethel.

Mr. Lowndes put up his eye-glass to discover who these angelic beings might be.

"A very substantial black angel!" he said. "But who is that country bumpkin? I don't know his face."

"Her nephew," said Sylvia. "Ethel and I met him the other day at the Manor House."

"He looks rather out of his element," observed the sarcastic Mr. Lowndes. "Probably he comes from the wilds of Cornwall or Caithness, where no man hath garden parties, and tennis is unknown."

"His name is Lancelot Bassett," said Ethel: "that sounds delightfully poetical, doesn't it?"

"I'm sorry for him," said Sylvia; "he'll never be able to 'live up to his name.' He says he finds it a trial."

"So I should judge, from his appearance," said Mr. Lowndes gravely.

"He looks shy and uncomfortable," said one of the Pendleburys.

"That's because he knows no one here," said Sylvia. "I'll go and speak to them."

And leaving the summer-house, she walked in the direction of the shrubbery, where Mrs. Anderson was standing talking to the hostess. But even while she was making this decisive movement, she was seized with repentance.

"Why couldn't I stay in the arbour, where we were getting on so nicely?" she said to herself. "How silly I've been! Now I shall have to remain with those people all the afternoon, and it will be unendurable. Mrs. Anderson is so tedious, and I feel sure 'Lancelot' is just the kind of person to cling to his one acquaintance in a party, like a drowning man to a straw, as mother's old etiquette-book has it."

She felt her friends' eyes upon her from the summer-house windows, and turned rather hot, but it was too late to go back now; so, putting a good face on it, she went up to Mrs. Anderson, and held out her hand, first to her, and then to Lancelot. That personage was not feeling so painfully shy as Sylvia imagined; yet it was pleasant to discover a face he knew amid the crowd of strangers. The white dress, the hair with a tinge of gold in it, the little glow on the frank face, made her look, to his eyes, like an embodiment of the joyful summer weather. Mrs. Anderson was effusive, as usual, and full of friendly inquiries about Mrs. Hornby. After a while, Mr. Bassett proposed that they should cross the lawn to a vacant garden-seat, and accordingly they moved in that direction.

Mrs. Anderson was not a woman of varied conversational resources, having a habit, which always struck Sylvia as excessively wearisome, of repeating the same thing over and over in terms very slightly varied; and many a time during the next half-hour did the poor girl gaze wistfully at the figures in the summer-house, rueing the impulse which had made her leave that pleasant company. But she saw no honourable retreat open from the position she had so rashly taken up. Oh, that something would happen! Oh, that some charitable person would appear, and relieve her of the burden! But nothing happened, and nobody came; the hostess was only too glad to perceive that someone had undertaken the charge of entertaining Mrs. Anderson and her bashful-looking companion.

"I suppose we shall just sit here the whole afternoon," thought Sylvia.

At last, however, Mrs. Anderson made a move.

"You two ought to have a walk round the gardens," she said. "I won't go with you; I should walk too slowly for such active young people. I'll just go across, and have a chat with Mrs. Surtees."

Sylvia would rather have gone back to the summer-house; still, any change was a relief.

"ETHEL APPEARED ON THE SCENE" (*p.* 40).

"Shall we go down through those lilacs?" said Lancelot, looking at a winding path, which led, as Sylvia knew, towards the greenhouse.

In that direction accordingly they went. Sylvia had not forgotten her resolve to sound her companion about the mysterious parcel, but did not quite see how to set about the task. It was impossible to ask a direct question, almost equally difficult to hint at it. While she was turning the matter over in her mind, Lancelot saved her any further perplexity by saying—

"You would guess, Miss Sylvia, that it was I who sent you the dress the other day. I hope you did not think it was taking too great a liberty. It seemed the least I could do by way of making amends for my clumsiness."

"Oh, how very kind of you!" said Sylvia. "But you make me uncomfortable, because—don't you see?—the silk's worth ever so much more than the one that was spoiled—and besides, it wasn't spoiled at all. I shall go on wearing it just the same."

Then a new idea flashed across her. Mrs. Hornby would probably say that it was not etiquette to accept such a present—and, being in the habit of speaking without much reflection, she added, shaking her head—

"And there's another thing: I don't think mother will allow me to wear it."

Her companion looked concerned.

"I'm afraid you don't like the colour. I chose the prettiest I could see—as I thought."

"Oh, it's not that at all," said Sylvia emphatically; "it couldn't possibly be a prettier colour."

"What is it, then?"

Sylvia hesitated.

"I expect mother will say she can't allow me to accept such a handsome present from a stranger."

"I'm not a stranger, am I?"

"To-day is only the second time I've met you," said Sylvia, smiling. This boy's friendliness was rather pleasant.

"But it's not a question of acquaintanceship, longer or shorter; it's a question of common honesty on my part, Miss Sylvia. I shall be awfully disappointed if you won't allow me to make compensation for my fault."

"It doesn't depend on me, Mr. Bassett; mother will have to settle it. And you mustn't imagine I don't appreciate your kindness. I'm very grateful to you, and I admire your taste."

By this time they had reached the greenhouses. A drop of rain fell on Sylvia's hand.

"I *did* think we were going to have a fine afternoon!" she exclaimed: "but the sky seems to have suddenly darkened."

"It will only be a shower; we can take shelter here," said the other.

The door was not locked, and they went in. They found themselves alone there.

"I hope we shan't have to stay here long," said Sylvia. It was one of the remarks one would fain have left unsaid; she hastened to repair her mistake. "But, after all, how pleasant it is here! The smell of the vines is so delicious, and it's not so overpoweringly warm and sickly as these places often are. We can sit on that step, and talk very comfortably, can't we?"

"And what shall we talk about?" said Lancelot, smiling.

"I've got such a good idea. First, I'll ask *you* a question, anything *I* like—and then you shall ask *me* a question, just whatever *you* like; and we'll bind ourselves to answer truly."

"All right; that's a fair bargain."

"But I'm afraid you'll think my question rather an odd one. Only I do really want to know your honest opinion about something. Do you find me duller than most people?"

"I'm not sure that I understand you. Will you put the same question in different words?"

"Do you think I'm less interesting—that I've less to say than most other girls?"

Lancelot smiled.

"That's one of the last faults I should think of laying to your charge, Miss Sylvia."

"Is that your genuine opinion?" said Sylvia anxiously.

"Quite genuine; judging, of course, from the two occasions on which I have had the pleasure of your company."

"That's a relief to my mind, for I believe people in general find me a very difficult person to get on with; no one cares to talk to me—outside my own family, I mean. And that often makes me rather unhappy."

"And how do you account for it—if it is so?"

"I can't account for it—and that's the worst part of the trouble. If I knew the reason, I might at least try to alter myself."

"I'm afraid I can't help you to find the cause, because I don't recognise the effect."

"What a pretty, courteous speech! I begin to think you are not unworthy of that chivalrous name of yours."

"It wasn't meant for a pretty speech—it was a statement of fact."

"You know what candid creatures brothers are, Mr. Bassett—— Oh, I forgot you had none. Well, never mind: my brothers often tell me I shall never get on in society, because I'm what they call a blue-stocking. I'm rather fond of books, and should like to have gone to Girton, only we couldn't afford it. But I don't see how that can make any difference, for I hide away all that kind of thing under a bushel whenever I am with strangers. The stupidest girl living couldn't make herself appear more ignorant than I."

She spoke with such emphasis that her companion could hardly help laughing.

"What kind of books do you like?"

"Oh, all sorts. Novels, and poetry, and history, and even scientific books occasionally. Now, isn't that a dreadful confession to make? That's just the kind of thing men hate, isn't it?"

"It's not at all the kind of thing I hate: so you needn't hide it away from me. Don't hide anything; just say whatever comes uppermost—and I'll do the same: that's the way to get on, isn't it?"

"That will be delightful!" said Sylvia, smiling. "Mind, it's a compact: we are both to say exactly what comes into our heads."

"Then the first thing that enters my head is that, as you've asked your question, and got a truthful answer, it's now *my* turn."

"Certainly. I've no secrets: at least, I don't remember any just now; so you can ask whatever you please."

"Then, if your fairy godmother came and offered to grant you one wish—as they do in the story-books—what would you choose?"

"That's too important a matter to settle off-hand. I may never have such a chance again. Give me time to consider."

Sylvia looked as solemn as if a real fairy, wand in hand, had appeared on the scene. Lancelot sat watching her contemplative face with no little interest.

At last she said, with a sigh—

"Oh, dear! I can't possibly bring everything into the compass of a single wish; so I must just confine myself to one thing, which I know will sound base and mercenary. But I can't help that. It *is* what I want."

"You make me feel very inquisitive, Miss Sylvia."

"I should like a great lot of money. There!"

"And if you had it, how would you spend it? What would you like to do with it?"

"What would I not like to do?—that's a more rational way of putting it. I shouldn't care to have a

greenhouse—that's one thing certain; and I don't think I want a carriage—yes, I should, though, for mother; nor yet a grand house with a crowd of servants. But I'd have a delightful old place in the country—the real wild country, I mean, not like this. It would be a long way from anywhere, with woods and wastes all round it. And I'd travel. I'd visit the places I've so often read about and longed to see. That's what I should like for myself. But there's no end to the things I would do for my brothers and sisters. Letty—my younger sister—should have singing lessons; she has a beautiful voice. The boys should go to a good public school. Mother should spend her winters at Mentone, and Ethel and I would go with her. We'd make all manner of interesting acquaintances there, and very likely——"

She stopped suddenly, for the second story of this castle in the air had always included romances, in which her sister and herself played principal parts in connection with heroes of a very different stamp from any men she had ever met in real life—heroes who had achieved great exploits of some kind, for, as she justly observed to herself, when one is drawing on the bank of imagination, one may as well write a large cheque as a small one.

"And 'very likely' what?"

"Oh, I don't know exactly. All sorts of thrilling things might happen out there. But now, haven't I said enough to prove how many good uses I should find for my money?"

Lancelot did not immediately reply to this question, for, while Sylvia dilated on visionary glories, she had been taking off, first, her gloves, and then her large hat; and he was noting the contrast between the creamy-white dress and the rather flushed, eager face, crowned with yellow hair, that looked all the better for being a trifle tumbled.

"Don't you agree with me, Mr. Bassett? I really ought to have a fortune!"

"I'm sure you'd dispense it generously, and some day I hope you may have your wishes."

"Thank you. I don't go so far as to *hope*. I content myself with fancying."

"Then you think, if you were rich enough, you could buy everything your heart desires? That's not the common experience, they say."

"I could, pretty nearly, I do believe—down to the box which once contained a cocked hat. I don't wonder you look puzzled, Mr. Bassett: that's a fine old crusted family joke!"

"Am I not worthy to understand it?"

"Before we came to Winston, we lived in a rather old house, where there was a garret full of family relics. When father died, and we had to move, an aunt of father's came to look through these old things, and she said to mother one day, 'Ethelwyn, I believe that garret contains everything the heart can desire, down to a box which once contained a cocked hat!'"

"I see the point of the joke now, Miss Sylvia."

"That's very clever of you, for people very seldom do see the point of my jokes—the world at large, I mean. But, let me inform you, in my own family my humour is highly appreciated. You see, I don't feel sufficiently at home with most outsiders to explain where the joke lies. But, oh! Mr. Bassett, what have I done? I've forgotten the disgraceful state of my hands, and taken off my gloves. It's a habit I have. I can't bear gloves: they make me so hot."

"I'll take mine off too, and then we can be companions in disgrace."

"No, we can't, for just look at these scratches. It's gooseberries that do it. You never gather gooseberries, do you?"

"I've not pulled any for a long time," said Lancelot, regarding her hands with a smile. "They do look as if they had been in the wars, poor things! But I shall be very glad to come and help you to gather gooseberries, if you'll allow me."

"Only too willingly. The smallest assistance thankfully received. Any day, Mr. Bassett. You may be sure of one thing: when I come to my kingdom, I won't pick gooseberries."

"Mind, I shall take you at your word, Miss Sylvia."

There was a slight pause. The heavy shower had passed off, and there were steps on the gravel walk. Angela and Mr. Lowndes opened the door.

"We're looking everywhere for you," said the former, with her pretty smile. "Mrs. Ayton's gathering up all the people for tea in the drawing-room. Of course everything out of doors is drenched. I'm afraid there's no chance of any more tennis."

"I'm sorry for that," said Sylvia, putting on hat and gloves. "My turn was not to come till later on, and now, I suppose, it will never come at all. May I introduce Mr. Bassett—Miss Daubeny?"

Angela bowed, and held out her hand, with some little remark on the unfortunate weather. Though she never talked anything but commonplaces, her commonplace had the happy characteristic of sounding just the right thing for the occasion; and now, as so often before, Sylvia herself was reduced, by her cousin's presence, to an awkward silence, and to what she herself would have described as "utter obscurity." They set out for the house, Sylvia leading the way with Mr. Lowndes.

"And how have you fared with your young savage?" asked Mr. Lowndes, in a tone which Sylvia considered disagreeably patronising.

"What can I do to set him down a little?" she said to herself; adding aloud: "I've found him very kind and pleasant, and not at all uncivilised. It's quite refreshing to talk to somebody who understands what one means."

Mr. Lowndes made no reply, and Sylvia felt vexed with herself: she had spoken with what Ethel would call unlady-like emphasis. She knew what Ethel's comment would have been if she had been present.

"That's the kind of thing that makes you unpopular, Sylvia."

They found the drawing-room crowded to overflowing. Sylvia was thankful to secure a seat in a

corner, while Angela, by a process of natural selection, found herself ensconced in a low chair near the door, which the first-comers had modestly left unoccupied, and surrounded by a group of young men, who had clustered in the door-way, as was the wont of Winston youths. Sylvia, relegated once more to obscurity, glanced across at her cousin.

"Oh, dear!" thought she, "my brief day is over. I knew it could never last. The Pendleburys and Mr. Bassett are getting to know people now, and they won't care to talk to Ethel or me again. I oughtn't to be disappointed, for of course I always knew it would be so; but I do think girls like Angela are rather greedy. If I have one person to talk to at a time, I'm more than content; and why need she grudge me poor Lancelot?"

The rain *had* made tennis impossible, as Angela had said, and it was not long before the party dispersed, Mrs. Anderson and her nephew being among the first to go.

As for the affair of the silk dress, that turned out exactly as Sylvia had foretold; it was pronounced impossible for her to accept it, and she had to write a stiff little note, at her mother's dictation, a discreet combination of decisión with polite acknowledgments, which, she felt sure, would hurt Lancelot's feelings.

And so one or two days passed by without event, till, on a certain afternoon when Sylvia was once more pulling gooseberries, Ethel came out, and said—

"Mr. Bassett is here, with a message from Mrs. Anderson—an invitation for us."

Sylvia was at no time distinguished by much natural coquetry, and, with respect to "that nice boy"—as, in spite of Ethel's protests, she persisted in calling him—she certainly had not a grain of feminine consciousness. It never occurred to her to adorn herself in any way for the visitor, and she walked straight into the drawing-room, without changing her somewhat tumbled print.

"I hope, Mr. Bassett," she said, "you've come to help me with the gooseberries, according to promise."

"With all my heart; but first I must deliver a message from my aunt. She intends to have a picnic to Allerton Abbey on Friday. I suppose you all know the place? and she hopes you and your sister will be of the party."

"A picnic! How splendid!" cried Sylvia, with sparkling eyes. "How kind of Mrs. Anderson to think of such a thing!"

Lancelot did not consider it needful to explain that he, and not his aunt, had devised the picnic, and was going to pay for it. He went on to give details: the party were to assemble on Friday, at two o'clock, at the Manor House, whence they would drive to Allerton. These little matters being satisfactorily arranged, he proposed to accompany Sylvia into the garden, and to work they went at once among the bushes.

"It's a good thing you came this afternoon," said Sylvia. "We shall have to work like young lions, for the cook wants to make jam with these tiny gooseberries. A great mistake—but I can't help it, for I don't give orders. I only do the drudgery."

"Mayn't we stop now and then to talk?"

"We must talk and work at the same time. I certainly don't mean to pick gooseberries in silence, if I can help it."

There was a family tradition that Miss Sylvia, in more youthful days, had been heard to say she counted all time lost that was not spent in talking.

"How did you enjoy Mrs. Ayton's party?" she continued, by way of an opening to conversation.

"I enjoyed the part in the greenhouse very thoroughly. We discussed wishes; don't you remember?"

"I remember. Of course we did."

"You wished for wealth, in order to see the world—among other things. Now, if you had your desire, where would you choose to go, I wonder?"

"Oh, I've fixed all that long ago. First, to North Devon, to see the places one reads about in 'Westward Ho!' and 'Lorna Doone.' It makes me angry to think how much better I could appreciate travelling than most people who can travel whenever they like; I've noticed they generally go to stupid places, such as Brighton; they're absolutely indifferent to historical or literary associations. The year after, I'd go up the Rhine, and take plenty of time to see the quaint Rhenish towns, such as Boppard. Angela went up the Rhine last year; but she was not worthy," concluded Sylvia, shaking her head solemnly.

"How do you know she was not worthy?"

"I asked her something about the Lorelei Rock, and she didn't even remember the name. And when I asked about Rolandseck and Nonnenwerth—you know the beautiful tradition?"

Sylvia looked inquiringly at her companion, who smiled assent.

"She said the beds at Rolandseck were not very comfortable. I gave her a withering glance, which was lost upon her. And Cologne: she didn't take the least interest in the cathedral, and had never heard the legend."

"Which legend, Miss Sylvia? There are more than one, aren't there?"

"I dare say there are, but I mean the one where the architect promises his soul to the devil in return for the plan of the building. They meet in a lonely place to exchange documents; the devil holds out his claw with the plan, and the architect is to hand over a deed of sale signed with his own blood. But the architect is the cleverer of the two: he clutches the plan, making the sign of the cross at the same moment; so the devil is forced to fly, but he keeps hold of one corner of the plan, which gets torn off in the struggle. Did you not know that was the reason Cologne Cathedral remained so long unfinished?"

"I'm afraid I must be unworthy too, for I didn't know it. Do you believe people can really sell their souls like that?"

"Perhaps not *like that;* but I suppose they often do something which amounts to the same thing."

"One hears of women selling themselves in marriage. Was that what you were thinking of?"

"That may serve as an instance, though I believe I was thinking of something rather different."

"Now, that's the sort of thing that to me is altogether inconceivable," said Sylvia, in a reflective tone. "Yet I suppose it does happen."

"So they say."

"Doesn't it seem almost past belief that a woman should be silly enough to marry a man she doesn't love, just because he is rich?"

"It isn't only women who do it. One of the arguments used against the Act giving married women the possession of their own property was, I remember, that it would prevent men from marrying."

"Oh, I can't believe you really saw that in print," said Sylvia, laughing; "that's too barefaced for anything. But, after all, there's one excuse for women which there isn't for men: it's so difficult for women to make their living. I do think it's very hard that women can earn so little money."

"You speak as if you had tried yourself to do it, and failed," said Lancelot, smiling.

"So I have. I've answered advertisements which promised to put you in the way of making two pounds a week without interfering with your present occupation. It was no good, of course. And I've written children's stories and articles for magazines, but they never so much as paid for paper and postage. And now I've left off trying."

"I should have thought you would have found plenty of occupation in such a large family."

"It wasn't *occupation* I wanted, Mr. Bassett: it was money. You can't enter into my feelings, of course. I dare say you've always had as much money as you could possibly use, and can just spend all your time in amusing yourself."

"I am not quite such a Crœsus as you seem to imagine, and not quite such a useless person either, I hope."

"Ah! but you needn't be useful unless you like. You've no profession, have you?"

"Not exactly, though the management of land takes up more time, one way and another, than one might suppose. There's always something cropping up that wants attending to. Besides, I've got an ambition. I should like to be a member of Parliament — that sounds presumptuous, doesn't it? For who knows whether I shall find any constituents willing to send me there?"

"I suppose the time for going about soliciting votes hasn't come yet," said Sylvia, with an air of solemnity.

"Not yet. You see, I don't wish merely to add an ounce of ignorance to one side of the scale or the other. I want to get to the bottom of some of these great questions, if I can."

"You mean that you spend your time studying politics? That must be very interesting. I always like to hear people talk of these things, though I don't know much about them myself, I'm ashamed to say."

"Shouldn't you like to learn?"

"I'm always intending to read the newspapers regularly, and the Parliamentary debates. One day perhaps I read them up, and next day I forget all about them again, and so I lose the thread."

"I'll teach you, if you like," said Lancelot eagerly. "If you really care to learn, I dare say I could explain a great many things to you."

"But are you going to stay at Winston long? Mrs. Anderson said you had only come on a short visit."

"I don't know yet how long I may stay. I like Winston."

"Winston people often complain of it. They call it a dull place."

"I haven't found it a dull place, Miss Sylvia."

"That's right! I've no patience with those people who call everything dull, secretly thinking it, no doubt, a proof of their own brilliancy; but *I* always set it down to stupidity. I suppose if we were only clever enough ourselves, we should find *everybody* interesting; what do you think?"

"I'm not sure; that's a question needing mature consideration."

So they chatted on till Sylvia's basket was filled.

"Now, Mr. Bassett, I'm going to look into your basket. Oh, for shame! You've only got about half as much fruit as I have! I know what it is: you're afraid of pricking your hands; you think your constituents won't like to see ugly scratches on them when you're canvassing."

Lancelot looked penitent.

"We've had so much pleasant talk that I've forgotten my duty. I'll make up for lost time."

And the future statesman resolutely thrust his hand into the thickest of a bush, from which it emerged with two berries of no great size.

"Is *that* the best you can do?" said Sylvia. "Look here!" and she began to pick at railroad speed. "Don't you feel envious admiration? I can beat you at gooseberries, though I mayn't understand politics."

Lancelot was considering whether this last remark might not afford a suitable opening for a renewed offer of lessons in politics, when Ethel appeared on the scene, looking delightfully cool and fresh in her pretty afternoon gown, set off by a great bunch of purple pansies. She glanced at Sylvia's sunburnt countenance, hat pushed awry, and brown bleeding hands, wishing, if it were only for the credit of the family, that she would bestow more care on her personal appearance. She really must give her one of her periodical lectures as soon as Mr. Bassett was gone. But Mr. Bassett seemed in no hurry to depart.

"Will you come in and have some tea?" said Ethel.

"Mind, if you do," said Sylvia, in a tone of severity, "you'll have to rush out here again the moment you've had one cup; you've been idling disgracefully! I can't let you go till you've filled that basket."

Lancelot turned to Ethel.

"I won't have any tea, thank you. I'll redeem my character for industry, and then I'm afraid I must be going."

"You've got quite enough for to-day," said Ethel hastily; "don't impose on Mr. Bassett any more."

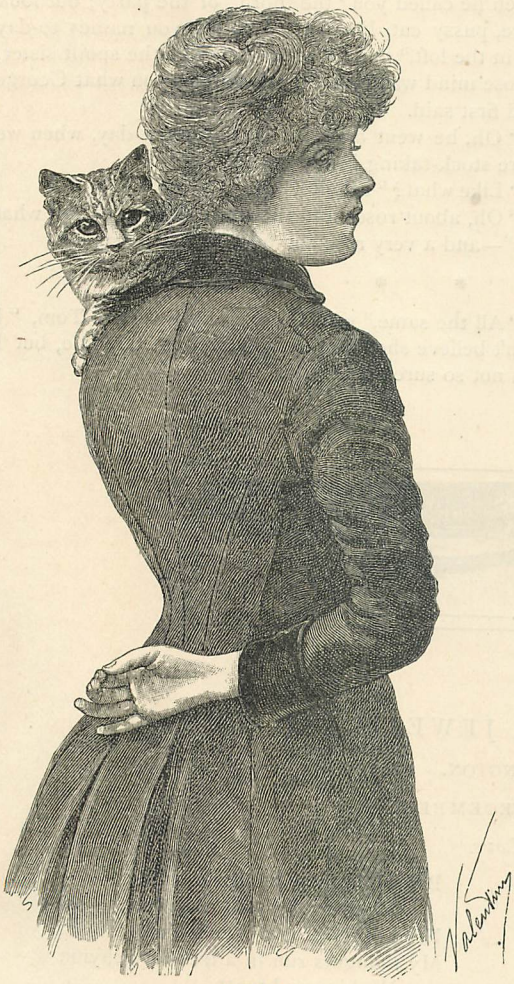
Lancelot seemed to take Ethel's speech as a dismissal; at all events, he declined the proffered tea, and said good-bye. As soon as the garden door closed behind him, Ethel took Sylvia seriously to task.

"I do think, Sylvia, you might take a little more pains with your dress and manners, especially when strangers are here."

"You don't suppose I'm going to change my dress, and put on pretty company manners, for that boy!" said Sylvia, with decision. "If our every-day clothes and behaviour aren't good enough for him, he can just stay at the Manor. By the way, Ethel: he never once alluded this afternoon to that unfortunate silk dress. He has some tact, after all, you see."

END OF CHAPTER THE SECOND.

THE ROSE GARDEN IN DECEMBER.



NELLY.

OLD Mr. Singleton, of Hollybush Manor, was undeniably a very particular and precise head of the household. Yet, with it all, no one was afraid of him, unless perhaps the question in dispute turned upon gardening matters.

It was, therefore, rather a satisfaction last month when, upon the return of the expedition that had gone into the woods in quest of rose stocks, George strolled into the conservatory, carrying with him the results of their labour in the shape of twelve good assortments of stocks, which met with his uncle's warm approval.

"Bravo, my boy!" said he; "nothing could be better than the selection you have made, and plenty of good roots, too! I see you have gone thoroughly well about your work; perhaps to-morrow some of you will give me a helping hand again."

Soon after twelve o'clock the next day, George and Tom, after labouring through a mathematical paper at Mr. Haredale's, found themselves slowly walking up the drive on their way back to the Manor, and were accordingly waylaid by their uncle as they neared the house, where their services were forthwith enlisted in the arrangement and planting of the stocks.

"Where's Nelly?" said the old gentleman, without looking up from the stake to which he was carefully securing one of the newly-planted stocks. "Ask her, Tom, to give you the tin box that has the garden nails, twine, and wire in. I told her the other day to get it replenished."

"Nelly!" shouted Tom, as he ran round the corner of the house, and a renewed shout of "Nelly!" at the bottom of the staircase and in the hall brought no response whatever. "Can't make her hear, uncle," said Tom, as he turned into the garden again.

"Find her at once, Amy, my dear," said her uncle; "she's probably up to some mischief."

"But what was *that?*" said Amy, and in the midst of a pause of intense expectancy, the smothered but unmistakable laugh of Nelly Singleton was heard in the loft of one of the stables. Half a minute more, and both George and Tom were up the perpendicular ladder, and there, like a very Ophelia, with hay intertwined with her fair hair, was the missing culprit.

"You naughty girl! what have you been doing up there—and with rabbits? How could you venture up?"

"What have I done Amy, dear? I merely took them up in the loft to have a game, and then it felt so warm in the hay, I went asleep."

And not a little foolish did the young damsel appear in the presence of this December garden party, before which she presently appeared, accompanied by her sister and Miss Haredale. Luncheon had almost got cold, and by way of a diversion, George proposed that a hasty refreshment should be had in the conservatory.

This was speedily got over, and as the gardening

operations had been all thrown back by Nelly's adventure, the whole party at once joined Mr. Singleton and Bailey. The newly-acquired rose stocks, a few more of which had just been contributed by Dobbin, were naturally the first subject of discussion.

"These," said Bailey, "we must plant in rows, the stocks quite eighteen inches apart from each other, with nearly four feet of space between the rows." Some were secured to stakes, but one long row of stocks were well supported by tying each stock to a rail, the rail itself being firmly held in its place by a stake at each end, and one strong stake in the centre. "This," added Bailey "is a good plan where many new rose stocks are put in at one time." As soon as planted, the stocks were well trodden in to prevent their swaying about in the gales, while Nelly's tin box, which had now been found, was most useful for its string and wire contents, when the stocks came to be secured to their supports. Mr. Singleton then rapidly explained the next stages of progress: how that in the spring the two best buds upon the upper part of the stock must be the only ones retained, and all that shoot out below these be rubbed off so as to throw the whole strength of the growth into the two that remain, and upon which, in the following July, the interesting process of budding will be made. "The stocks," he continued, "will sometimes die down a little way after planting, but at any future time the dead part can be cut away fairly close to the two healthy buds on which your hopes depend."

"Now, my lads," said their uncle, who had not as yet quite recovered from the annoyance that his truant niece had caused him, and who was still disposed to snub her for the afternoon, "see how gay our beds look now." The old gentleman, in fact, had, since the excitement of the morning, diverted himself by plunging a number of gay evergreens in various parts of the garden and in conspicuous places. Variegated holly, box, arbutus, the aucuba japonica, laurustinus, the Portugal and common laurel, with several other evergreens, all found a place in the beds, and their presence everyone agreed greatly relieved the dull monotony of a winter garden.

"I say, Nelly," said George, after they had gone, "how fierce you looked this afternoon at Haredale when he called you 'the thorn' of the party; but look here, pussy cat, I'm sorry I called you names to-day up in the loft," and he began to fondle the spoilt sister, whose mind was evidently dwelling upon what George had first said.

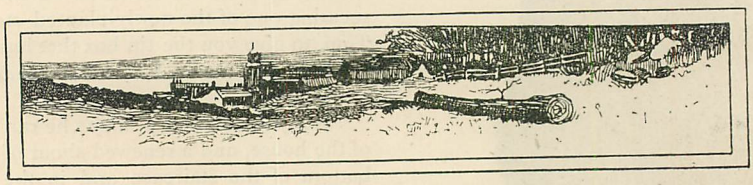
"Oh, he went on like that the other day, when we were stock-taking in the woods."

"Like what?" asked Tom.

"Oh, about roses and thorns, and I don't know what all"—and a very rose she became as she spoke.

* * * * *

"All the same," said George afterwards to Tom, "I don't believe she cares a fig for poor Haredale, but I am not so sure about *him*."



THE YEAR'S JEWELS.

BY M. C. GILLINGTON.

TURQUOISE: DECEMBER.

Success in Love.

SHINE fair, thou fading sun!
Shine fair, thou frosty blue!
For though the year's long tale be done,
Another and a lovelier one
Begins anew!

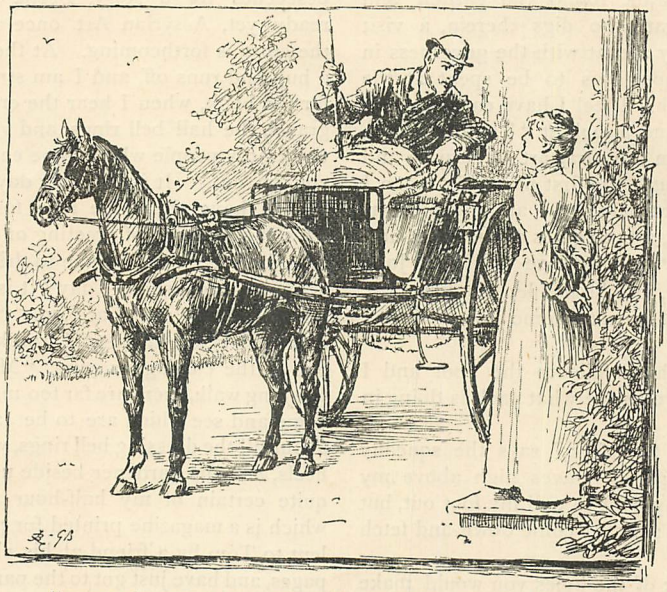
Red, red against the sky,
The clustered berries glow,
Along the path the snowflakes lie,
Just as we saw them, you and I,
A year ago.

But while the Christmas chime
Rings out by east and west,
Here in the frozen winter-time
My thoughts run in a true-love rhyme
Within my breast.

I clasp with tenderest care
My treasure safe and fast,
My radiant gem, my jewel rare,
My darling precious, past compare—
Mine own at last!

THAT QUIET HALF-HOUR.

THE PLAINT OF A HOUSEMOTHER.



"I REALLY THINK YOU MIGHT HAVE MANAGED TO READ IT."

"I REALLY think you might have managed to read it, Maude; the 'Acanthus' has been in the house for a week," said my husband, as he buttoned his glove, mounted the dog-cart, and drove to the station on his way to London. I looked regretfully after the cart as it whirled round the corner, for there was reproach in every line of dear Tom's back, and I knew he was saying to himself, "She has nothing to do, positively nothing, and yet she will not read one little paper to please me."

"I will find time for it to-day," I resolve, and indeed I wish to read the article very much. My husband has to leave early as the journey to London is rather long, he breakfasts alone, and then I have my three elder children for company during my repast. As the porridge and bread and jam disappear, I have to answer a good many questions.

These are some of them:

How old was Jack Cade when he rebelled?

Will the Queen only see people who speak good grammar?

Why do Americans talk English when America was found out by a Spanish man?

Why do we have six bothering cases to learn about in Latin, when there are only three in English?

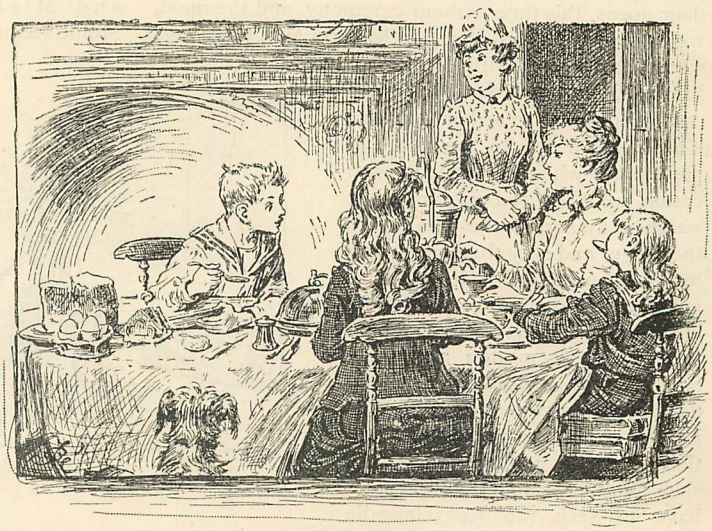
Why don't iron ships sink?

Why are places called Parishes?

What are Thugs?

Who was it made wings of wax?

I have to give twenty minutes after breakfast to looking in the Encyclopædia for the answers to such of these questions as I have not been able to furnish, and I wish my children's wits did not travel so far



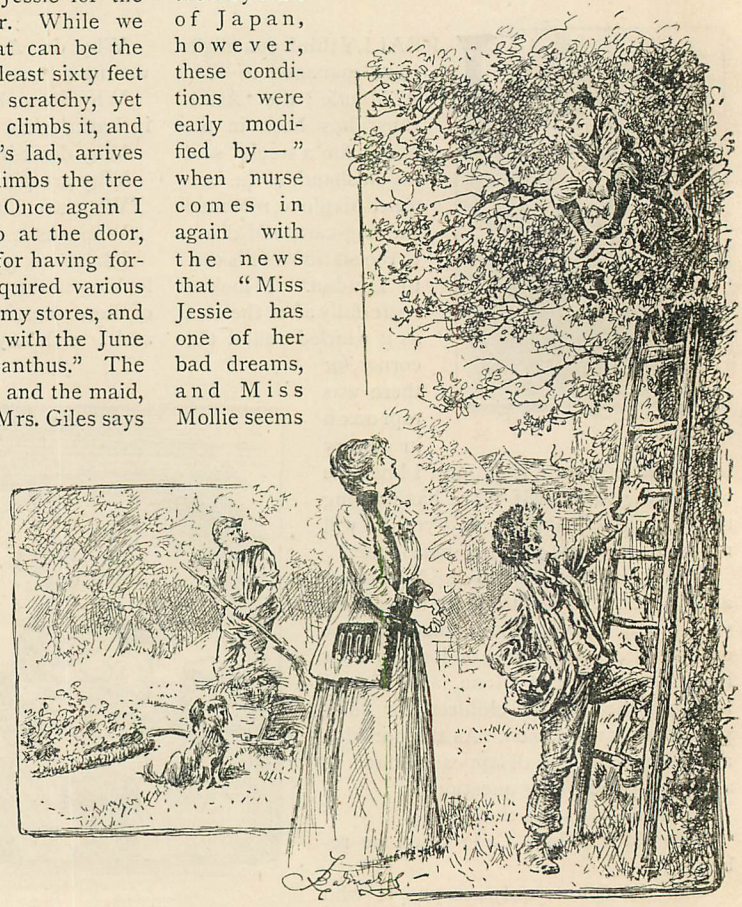
"I HAVE TO ANSWER A GOOD MANY QUESTIONS."

afield, or that my head were better lined. A visit to the nursery follows, then an interview with cook, rather a longer one than usual on account of a coming dinner party, next a walk round the garden and a talk with the autocrat who digs therein, a visit to the stables, and finally a chat with the governess in the schoolroom. An hour has to be spent at the writing table, and after this I feel I have earned a rest in a comfortable chair, and a look at "The difference, and the likeness, between the early art of Assyria and Japan." Half-way through the first page, just when I am revelling in the quaint paradoxes and bold assertions of Julius Blakiston, a tap comes at the door, and the parlour-maid says: "If you please 'm Master Jack is at top of the elm-tree, and he has let his boot fall, and he wants to know if he may come down without it?"

Of course the "Acanthus" falls to the floor and I run out to the tennis-lawn to see what Jack is doing in the elm.

"Mother, I stuck in this fork," says the squeaky voice from out the tangle of leaves high above my head, "and I unlaced my boot to pull my foot out, but then I dropped the boot; shall I come down and fetch it?"

"Certainly not; think of the holes you would make in your stocking!" I shout, then send Jessie for the gardener's boy to come with a ladder. While we await him I have time to wonder what can be the pleasure of climbing that tree. It is at least sixty feet high, and its bark is very hard and scratchy, yet twice a week during the summer Jack climbs it, and never wearies. William, the gardener's lad, arrives beaming, puts the boot in his pocket, climbs the tree and helps Jack on his downward way. Once again I go back to Assyrian Art. Another tap at the door, this time nurse enters with an apology for having forgotten in the early morning that she required various tapes, buttons, and cottons. A visit to my stores, and again I am seated by the open window with the June breeze ruffling the pages of the "Acanthus." The door opens, this time without ceremony, and the maid, with a scared face, exclaims, "Please 'm Mrs. Giles says what shall she do with Jim? He has scalded himself dreadfully, and could you go down to her at once." This means a rush to my medicine cupboard, whence, armed with cotton wool, linseed oil, and lime water, I fly across the meadow to the lodge, and stay there attending to Jim's hurts, and trying to comfort his mother till the sound of the luncheon bell sends me to the house to carve roast mutton and serve rice pudding for all four of my flock, who are gathered now. During this meal I keep the conversation to cricket matches, dolls, and such like topics, so that I may not have to seek the Encyclopædia again, and dinner ended, Jack and Jessie go to practice, and Mollie and Bertie ought to start for a walk, while I might pick up my delightful magazine, but Mollie climbs on my lap and beseeches for a story, Bertie says nurse won't be ready yet, Assyrian Art once more gives way, and the story is forthcoming. At the end Mollie gives me a hug and runs off, and I am stretching out my hand for the book, when I hear the crunch of wheels on the gravel, the hall bell rings, and visitors are announced, the kindly people who "come early to catch you before you go out." It is a lovely day, and it seems several friends have the same idea, for till half-past four I have the pleasure of greeting one after another of my neighbours. Then I have to drive out myself, to visit acquaintances whose "day" it is, in places some miles apart. Home again at 6.30. "I *will* have my quiet half-hour before dinner," I think, but Tom helps me out of the carriage saying, "Maude, I want you in the long walk, there are far too many scarlet geraniums, come and see which are to be taken out." We walk about till the dressing bell rings, with the children at our heels, and the gardener beside us. Dinner over I feel quite certain of my half-hour with the "Acanthus," which is a magazine printed for private circulation and lent to Tom by a friend at his club. I have read ten pages, and have just got to the paragraph beginning "In the fairy-land of Japan, however, these conditions were early modified by—" when nurse comes in again with the news that "Miss Jessie has one of her bad dreams, and Miss Mollie seems



"WILLIAM CLIMBS THE TREE AND HELPS JACK."

very hot and restless." I mount the nursery stairs, and stay till Jessie is quietly asleep, and Mollie's temperature ascertained to be normal, and on coming back to the drawing-room I find Tom talking with an old gentleman and his daughter, our nearest neighbours, whom he is hospitably asking to stay the rest of the evening; they have come for a book, and Tom delights to display his treasures, so the hours pass quickly, and at eleven, when they leave us, I am really too tired to read any more.

"I suppose you must take the 'Acanthus' back to-morrow, Tom?" I say when we are alone. "I have not had time to read that paper."

"I fear I must; Sir Charles asked me for it to-day, but I am sorry you have not read it, for I asked Blakiston to come on Thursday instead of Stuart, who called to tell me he must leave town to-morrow, you don't mind, dear, do you?"

"What about Mr. Blakiston? Certainly not, I shall be glad to have him at dinner," I reply, but I regret more than ever the loss of the half-hour that would have made me acquainted with his charming article.

"I am afraid you do not care about reading so much as you did, my dear," says Tom, patronisingly, as he walks to the door.

"Tom, how *can* you?" I exclaim, vehemently. "It is that I have such incessant interruptions—listen," and I hold his coat button, while I recount the day's experiences.

"Well," he says, unmoved, "this is exceptional. Jemmy Giles doesn't get scalded, and the Waltons don't come in for the evening, always."

"No, of course not, but this is only one day of my usual life, and *other* interruptions occur instead," I say severely. It is useless, I know. Tom goes to smoke, and at the club to-morrow he will say to Sir Charles: "What a pity it is, so many women give up everything in the way of culture a few years after they marry!"

A TALK WITH THE AUTOCRAT WHO DIGS IN THE GARDEN (*p.* 44).

I ask—how am I to read newspapers, magazines, travels, novels, biographies, within a month of their publication (to say nothing of having such a book, perhaps as Oliphant's "Scientific Religion" thrown in occasionally)—and yet to lead the life of a sociable woman with a household to look after? Will someone reply?

M. R. L.

HAD HE KNOWN.

A STORY OF NEW ZEALAND GOLD THIRST.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

WE do not readily associate the idea of quietness with a mining township. It seems to be taken for granted that where men search for gold there must be excitement and adventure, that the pulse of existence will be quickened to feverish rapidity, and life's struggle fought out with relentless energy. But much depends on the measure of success granted to the gold-seekers. After all, Nature is more inclined to be parsimonious than prodigal of her treasure. As in most businesses there is a retail branch, so also in gold-mining. Where its gatherings are by grains and pennyweights rather than by ounces—where, in fact, men are making their livings and not their fortunes—it sinks to the level of an ordinary trade, sober and steady in its operations as any old-established city business.

And so, the village among the mines of which this tale will be told was quiet as any country hamlet amid flowery meads, and with little enough golden about it except the autumn corn-fields. Even the main thoroughfare seemed veiled in seclusion and mystery; for after starting from the beach as a broad, well-formed street, it changed suddenly to a grass-grown lane, then narrowed to a bridle-track, then, as if ashamed of this conclusion, buried itself in the bush. There was bush all round—a New Zealand forest, dense and dark. There were hills also: a hundred wooded peaks formed the jagged outline of the misty, purple-tinted range that swept the eastern sky-line. Westward was the sea, spread with islands and broken into bays. So, between the water and the hills, the settlement lay

cradled in a sheltered nest, and, one might fancy, was lulled to sleep by soft rustlings from the wind-tossed trees above and the unending murmur of the waves beneath.

It had slept here a long while, as time is reckoned in this part of the world. Thirty years ago men washed gold out of the sands of its clear-running streams, and, searching through the rocky gorges and ravines, found everywhere the same glittering specks. But, either because the gold was like the brilliancy of certain clever persons—patchy, and all on the surface—or because energy and enterprise, or, what is almost as indispensable, capital was wanting, the new gold-field did not prove such an Eldorado as had been anticipated. It continued to exist, and no more—that is, it hung on to the skirts of time, and waited for something to turn up.

Something did turn up. Rich mines were discovered, but in a neighbouring district, and there, as by magic, a town sprang up in the wilderness, its busy streets thronged with people, the silence of the overhanging hills rudely broken by the ceaseless thud of the battery stampers, grinding out gold night and day. With a start the older settlement awoke, and made determined efforts to overtake its more successful rival. The hillsides were scarred and hacked till patches of bare earth showed amongst the green far out to seaward; the streams were dammed across, and water-wheels drove the quartz-crushing mills. Houses, stores, banks, and hotels were added to the small cluster of buildings upon the flat; the oldest inhabitants assured each other that better times were coming: there would be a "boom" in mining before long.

There was a "boom"—in mining shares and bogus companies. The dulness and stagnation that the little place had known before its short gleam of prosperity were as nothing to that into which it fell when these had collapsed. Most of the mines were closed—the mining population was reduced by one-half. Those claims that were still kept going were mostly managed by "tributers"—parties of miners who worked on shares, and who somehow managed to wring from the soil more gold than the legion of defunct companies which they had succeeded. There was plenty of gold "somewhere about"—that was an article of faith with these hardy miners.

There was old John Polcraft, for instance, who clung to his cherished belief in a great central lode whence all others radiated, and which, therefore, must lie in the very heart of the range—a mass of pure gold. The great facts of science, with a professor to back them, made no impression on John.

"Bless you!" he exclaimed, "I was mining when that man was a baby. He knows a lot out of books; but what's that to us who've been handling the stuff all our lives? Some of the things he told us I'm not going to swallow. I've seen gold oftener than him, and I've seen it in all sorts of situations. He's tried to learn about it inside a house, and that's not to be done anyhow."

"You bet!" answered John's mate, who, like himself, had dug for gold in California and Victoria as well as in New Zealand.

They were discussing the professor and his lectures under the verandah at Burrit's. Burrit's was the principal hotel, the social centre of the settlement, and its most imposing edifice. It was a large two-story building, with verandahs on three sides, and a balcony which had a charming prospect of the range and its hundred peaks. The hotel had been built during the bygone days of prosperity, and never since that time had found occupants for its twenty bedrooms, or for more than half the seats at the long table in the dining-room.

Dining at Burrit's, with a Sahara of white tablecloth stretching beyond you into silence and gloom, was a melancholy business. At the present time there were four lodgers in the house. Burrit himself stood in the doorway, listening to the conversation of the two miners.

"Oh, the professor's all right," he said. "I know he is, for I've read up the subject myself. I ought to know something about it in other ways, too. I've knocked about on the gold-fields a good deal."

"So've we all," replied Polcraft; "and I'd like you to say who discovered them—the gentlemen who talk science, or men like us who do the work?"

"Who discovered them? Well, whoever it was, you may depend on it he got nothing for his trouble. Look at the poor fellow who found gold here—not far from where we're standing. It did him no good. Government promises a reward of £5,000 for a payable gold-field. They've never paid it yet, and never will. Just the same, I believe, in other places. They say that the man who discovered gold in California died poor. All the millions taken out there didn't benefit him. It seems unlucky to be first in the field; better come afterwards, and jump someone's claim."

"But what's that to do with it?" asked Polcraft. "I wasn't asking what became of them afterwards, but what sort of men they were."

"Oh; well, I suppose they were of your sort. You see, these scientific gentlemen don't tackle the rough country as you do, hanging over places where you can break your neck in two seconds if you like, and tramping twenty miles a day with your swag on your back, and living for weeks in the bush—with next to nothing to live on, too."

"Ay, that's it!" said Polcraft's mate gruffly; "and you may do all that, and keep on doing it, and never get a sight of gold."

"Of course; that's the beauty of the thing," replied Burrit. "Just a game of chance: you go straight past a reef that would have made your fortune, and another fellow—a regular duffer—comes and bumps his head against it. I don't see how they're going to make a science of that."

"No; and a hundred professors won't make me believe that they can!" cried Polcraft. "To be sure, there's indications. I know that as well as him. I don't want 'em describing. I guess I know likely country when I see it. But often enough it's by chance one hits on the best spots; and it's not always the smartest men who do it. Now, there's Ingram. He knows no more about mining than that child

yonder; but I shouldn't wonder if, just from the contrariness of the thing, he were to come on something good."

"I should be surprised if he knew it when he saw it. What about Ingram mining? Why doesn't he stick to his farm?"

"Haven't you heard? He's crazed about gold-finding. It was that new rush over at Moncwai that did it. He went to the place, and thought the stone was just like what he has on his own farm. So he's been prospecting as well as he knows how."

"They are very poor, those Ingrams," said Burrit.

"Ay, poor enough. He's not a man to make money except by accident. Well, good morning. I came down early for a few things from the store, some blasting powder among the lot. Ho—ho! I hope Ingram won't meddle with that. If he does, he's more likely to blow himself up than anything else."

"Better keep your eye on him," said Burrit, with a laugh, as he went inside. It was early yet; the eight o'clock breakfast had not been served. Amy Burrit was in the kitchen, superintending the preparation of the first meal of the day. She and a maid-servant did most of the work of the hotel, Burrit himself minding the bar, which seldom had anyone in it, and a boy being kept to attend to the window-cleaning, knife-polishing, and boot-blacking department. What Burrit would have done without his daughter is hard to say. It was Amy who ordered and calculated everything with the utmost nicety: who kept the books and made out the bills: who set the table neatly and daintily: who, since the cook had been dismissed for economy's sake, cooked the dinners, and cooked them with professional skill. She rose early, and too often went to bed late; the monotony of one day and its multitude of little cares was like that of all the others; she had no holidays, and could not spare the time to be tired. Thus it followed that she looked a little older than her age; a line here and there, where lines should not have been; a pale and slightly hollowed cheek, and hands that were thin and brown, and roughened in the palm. Poor Amy! yet she never thought of herself as in need of pity. A broad forehead, fine brown eyes, somewhat darker than her hair, and a well-curved, determined-looking mouth made her face pleasant to look upon and remember. But pleasanter still was her voice, with never a harsh tone in it, and her ready laugh, as infectious and irresistible as laughter always is that comes straight from a joyous heart. Perhaps, in this delightful laugh lay the secret of her popularity. For in these lugubrious days, a person who laughs well, who goes about bubbling over with joy, and, like a never-failing spring, slakes our thirsty sorrowful souls with pure draughts of innocent gladness, is a valuable tonic to a whole neighbourhood: a friend worth sticking to: of more avail sometimes than a regiment of physicians.

"Amy," said her father, "has the doctor come back?"

"The doctor? No. I suppose he is not up yet; it's hardly his time."

"Up!" cried Burrit, with a loud laugh. "If he never rose early in his life, he has done this morning."

"Then someone was ill, and sent for him. Who was it?"

"I sent for him," said Burrit, laughing again. "I've been taking a rise out of him; the fellow is so absurdly lazy, I couldn't resist the temptation. I called him up, and told him old Mrs. Phipps wanted him, and that he'd better hurry off: delay might be dangerous with a woman of her age—ninety-two, she says, but I don't believe it; she's at the time of life when people add on the years instead of taking them off. She was here last night, going on nicely against the doctor, who, she says, did her more harm than good last time he attended her. 'I'd like to see him, and speak my mind out,' she said. 'All right,' I said; 'I'll send him up;' and so I did."

"Oh, father, what a shame!" said the girl, although she could not help laughing. The practical jokes which Burrit indulged in did not meet with her approval. He would victimise anyone, not sparing his best friends.

"If Mr. Burrit was alone on a desert island," Polcraft had remarked, "he'd take himself in, rather than not have his bit of fun."

"Well, perhaps it was a shame," said Burrit, with some compunction. "Here he comes, though," as the doctor shot in at the front door, looking excited, but showing nothing of that acerbity of temper usually exhibited by those who have been imposed upon. He seemed refreshed and exhilarated, or as if someone had done him a service.

"How is Mrs. Phipps?" inquired Burrit, with a look of joyful anticipation.

"Never saw her," said the doctor, taking his seat at the table, and beginning on his porridge at once, as if he had not a moment to spare.

"Never saw her?"

"No; I'd no time. Mrs. Phipps may wait; she's not ill: she never is. Something more important turned up. Glad I was out early; believe, after all, early morning is the best time of the day; used to think the stuff written about it was a lot of poetical humbug."

The doctor spoke in disconnected sentences, as if the labour of supplying all the necessary parts of speech was too much for him. Though young in years, he had a faded, wearied appearance, and treated all subjects except those connected with his profession with languid indifference, while it seemed as if he could never go to bed early enough, nor sleep too long in the morning. So extraordinary was his devotion to sleep, and so marked his aversion to any kind of exertion, that it remained a mystery how he had gained his diploma. Apparently, the doctor had crammed so vigorously for his examination that he was still tired out, though it was three years since he had passed. He read nothing between the medical journals, he talked as little as possible, and when he was not on his professional rounds, spent most of his time on the balcony, looking out of a telescope, but at what none could imagine.

"What was amiss?" inquired Burrit.

"Most important thing I've had to do with here.

Man met with accident felling big tree; got mixed up with the branches, both legs crushed; nothing for it but amputation."

"How terrible!" said Amy, shuddering. "Poor fellow! he will feel it so."

"Feel it? not at all," said the doctor. "Chloroform, you know."

"Oh, but the misfortune—being a cripple for the rest of his life!"

"Not likely to get over it," the doctor mumbled indistinctly.

"I suppose it's what you would call an interesting case?" observed one of the lodgers.

"Very," said the doctor. "It's an operation, you know, which I can't expect to have the chance of performing very often."

"Good gracious, Dr. Lilly!" exclaimed Burrit. "I believe, if you had your way, you wouldn't leave the whole settlement a leg to stand on."

"Oh, I'm sorry for the poor fellow," protested the doctor. "Took it very coolly when I told him: broke it gently, you know: said, 'Simcox, awfully sorry; but both these legs will have to come off, and quick too!' He just said, 'All right, doctor; knew it had done for me.' Must be off," he continued, rising from the table. "Only came back for breakfast; fearfully hungry; early morning air; excitement, too; shall be used up after this."

"You must send James into the bar, Amy," said Burrit, when he and his daughter were left alone. "I'm going to Auckland to-day."

"To-day, father?" said Amy, anxiously. She was well acquainted with the reason of Burrit's frequent visits to town.

"Yes," said Burrit; "I've some business that won't wait." His manner had suddenly changed, and the expression of his countenance also. He never joked about business: it was much too serious in its complications. The fortune he had made years ago had been lost in disastrous speculations; the property he still held was well-nigh useless. He had shares in mines which had never paid a dividend; land he could neither lease nor sell; and an hotel which, let his daughter save and pinch as she would, did little more than pay expenses. With all this to furnish food for thought, it was surprising that Burrit could be sufficiently versatile to devise practical jokes, or to enjoy them when made. But he had a convenient way of thinking as little as possible of disagreeable things. So little was he distressed by his impecuniosity that it was a saying amongst his friends that his spirits rose in proportion as his affairs became more desperate.

It was not so with his daughter. She knew how deeply her father was involved, and the debts which he bore along so jauntily weighed heavily on her mind. Another of her cares—and a wearying one—was the constant attention required by her mother. Mrs. Burrit believed herself to be afflicted by a variety of ailments; but no doctor having been able to discover these mysterious diseases, she had formed a great contempt for the medical profession, and now treated her own case, with the result that she was always in one state of being—nervous, hysterical, and depressed. Whatever Burrit's faults might be, in one thing he never erred: in tenderness and forbearance towards his wife. He believed that she was a great sufferer: a woman whose delicate frame had endured enough to have killed a dozen strong men; and if Mrs. Burrit's own statements could have been accepted, this would have been no exaggeration.

With Amy and her father it was a sacred duty to keep everything from the invalid that could grieve or vex her, and to be at their best and brightest when in her presence. This day, for the first time, Amy found it hard work to entertain her mother. Still, she had to furbish up her wits to the task, and was so far successful that the cheerfulness assumed for another's sake cheered her own heart, and caused her to forget the trouble that loomed from afar.

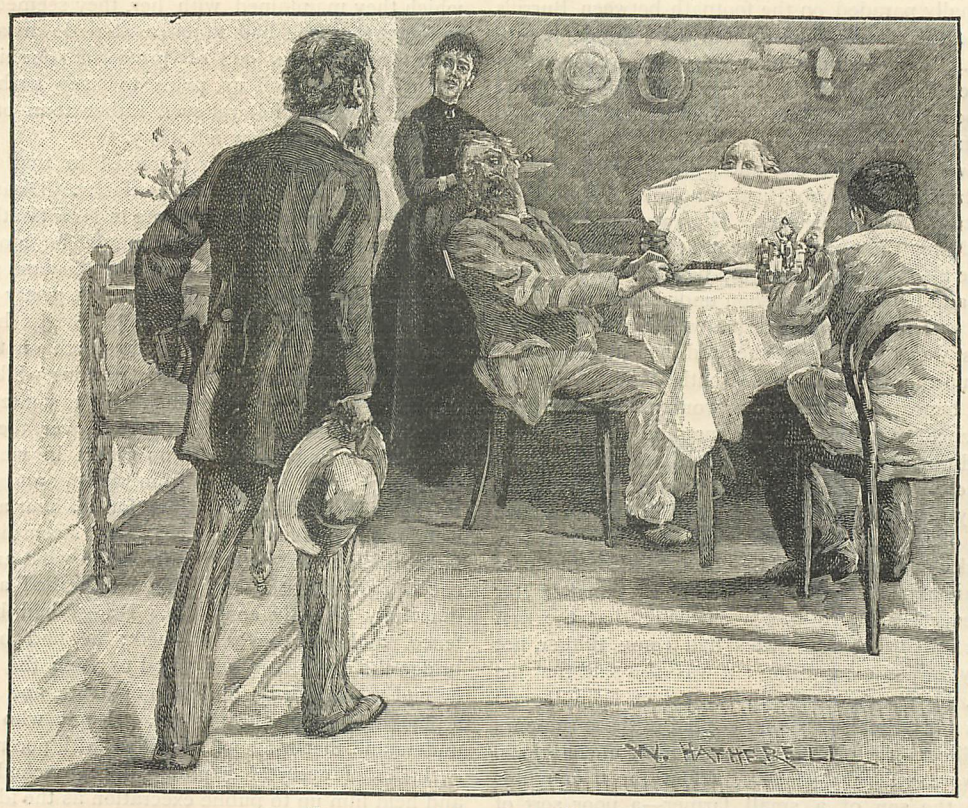
CHAPTER THE SECOND.

SOUTHWARDS from the settlement ran a broad level road, crossing the flat land at the base of the range. This was a country freed from the dominion of the bush, only here and there bearing groups of trees or sheltering the streams in bosky dells, where, under arched tree-ferns, amongst thickets of strong-scented manuka, sprinkled with white flowers, or by rustling flax bushes, the water went its murmuring way.

It was a farming district, or, to speak more cautiously, one which might be farmed. As yet, agriculture was not in a very forward state. But grass fields and settlers' homesteads were in sight.

After passing through this pleasant country, the road was suddenly interrupted by one of the great spurs of the range, which at intervals thrust themselves like outstretched arms across the plain. Here, indeed, were two spurs, with a narrow valley wedged between; and in this valley lay a farm, as sheltered and sunny, but as solitary a spot as could have been chosen for miles around.

At the head of the valley rose two of the highest summits of the range—landmarks well known to sailors on that coast—and by their peculiar form easily to be distinguished from the neighbouring peaks. Side by side, like immense buttresses, they jutted from the face of the range, rising gradually at first from the spurs that enclosed the valley, then steeper and steeper, till at last they reared themselves into sheer precipices. Between them, the range was cleft and torn almost in twain; but the jagged rents were hidden by the densest bush. Only the precipices above remained bare, lichen-stained in patches, and with tufts of starry celmisias and astelia bushes fringing their narrow ledges: a fugitive and scattered growth, hardly noticeable, amidst wide blank spaces of stone, where no plant found root-hold. These are the "Sentinels." The time when they were not—who knows? They, like the stars, may count the centuries as days. They are older than the valley which they guard: older than the plain below, which for ages has seen them as it sees them now—dark even to inky blackness beneath the stars of night, mist-robed



"HERE HE COMES, THOUGH" (*p.* 47).

in early morning, and a wall of radiant purple when the sunset fires the western sky.

There is a touch of romance in most natures, and doubtless it was this feeling which induced a certain John Briggs to buy a farm in this out-of-the-way, world-forgotten valley. It was not reported that he was less prosaic, either in conversation or appearance, than most colonists; but there must have been some poetry in his soul, for he loved the savage wildness of the place; the dark-hued forest, whose ragged edges reached almost to his door; the swift, bright streams; the solitude that, like a velvet mantle, noiselessly enfolded them all. But Mrs. Briggs was of another mind. To that good woman poetry was a thing of naught. She liked to have neighbours within easy calling distance, and would have preferred a sight of the face of some friendly gossip looking in at her door to the finest prospect the sun ever shone upon. Loneliness and seclusion so told upon her that at last Briggs parted with his mountain farm, and led her away to a neighbourhood more populous and less picturesque.

His friends had predicted that it would be long before he found a purchaser for the farm. But almost immediately he had the good hap to fall in with a man after his own heart, who seemed to be searching for just such a place, and who, so far from having any objection to loneliness, avowed that he "rather liked it." The fact which had grieved Mrs. Briggs—that the nearest neighbour was three miles away—was of no importance to Ingram, the new owner of the farm. "If we're suited to each other, we shall get over that distance," he said; "and if not, it's as well to have some space between us. Not out of the way at all, Mr. Burrit, and the loveliest place I ever saw! You New Zealanders don't half appreciate your own country. Over there"—and he waved his hand as if beyond the far horizon he saw the sun-burnt plains and the dull-coloured vegetation of the land in which he had been born—"I had a sickening of bad seasons, drought and heat, death and destruction. You've never ridden for days through a country where the sheep and cattle seemed to be eating dust, and camped by a water-hole where you had to climb over twenty dead bodies to scrape some slimy stuff into a billy, and boil and skim, and boil again, before you could make up your mind to drink it. But it's a grand country!" he added, unwilling to disparage his native land. "We want your climate, and then, as the Americans say, we'd whip creation!"

Ingram had come to see his farm, and to make some preparation for his wife and children. At the end of the fortnight they arrived. The wife was a delicate-looking young woman, under medium height, and slightly formed. She spoke well, she moved gracefully, her plain print gown, nicely made and well-fitted, though the material was so cheap, somehow looked better than the much more expensive costumes

occasionally paraded on the footpath between Burrit's hotel and the wharf—the extent of the fashionable promenade. With singular unanimity the whole settlement pronounced her to be "a real lady," and wondered how a poor plodding fellow like Ingram had succeeded in winning such a wife.

Her two children—a boy and a girl—were hardly out of babyhood, and in Amy Burrit's opinion the loveliest, merriest little ones ever seen. They were much petted by her during the two days spent at the hotel, and in this time also a warm friendship began between their mother and herself. Amy soon understood that Mrs. Ingram was not on good terms with her family, and that this was one reason she and her husband had broken up their home in New South Wales. She had married beneath herself—for a woman, an unpardonable offence. On one side it may be said that her husband was neither ill-bred nor destitute of education: on the other, that her own family was not entitled, either by birth or position, to hold itself very far above the rest of human kind. Mr. Chillcot, her father, was a retired Government official. Mrs. Chillcot (none of her acquaintances could forget this) was the daughter of a general. There was a suspicion that the first Chillcot in New South Wales had come thither, not willingly, but on compulsion; it was also said that the general, by his comrades in arms, had been looked upon as a disgrace to the service; but of these rumours the Chillcots themselves were serenely unconscious. They were vulgarly proud. When their daughter married the son of a small farmer—a poor sort of fellow, whom no one knew or had ever heard of—they felt themselves disgraced, insisted that they should not be forced to associate with the "common people" thus brought under their notice, and bewailed their misfortune unceasingly.

To insult and exasperate, no one who is a master of the art need descend to strong language or heavy blows. That would be low and coarse. There is a refined way of doing the thing. Half of Mrs. Ingram's relatives ignored the fact of her husband's existence; the others were offensively condescending: talked down to what they supposed was the level of his capacity, invited him to their houses when they were sure of being alone, and in a hundred ways made themselves most amicably disagreeable. His own people, who were no better pleased with the match, solemnly wagged their heads over the ignorance of all useful knowledge displayed by the young wife. Their opinion was that John's pride would be his ruin; but for that, he would have married a plain hard-working woman, as his brothers had done. His old friends fancied that he avoided them; he thought himself above them, now that he was connected with such grand people as the Chillcots. Mrs. Ingram's friends wavered between passive indifference and laboured attempts to be more affectionate than ever. In choosing their wedding presents, they had been careful to select nothing that was "too good" for a farmer's wife—cutlery that was strong and rough; china, useful but unlovely; unbleached table linen of extraordinary coarseness, and a great store of kitchen towels. In the fitful intercourse which they maintained with her, they seemed unable to forget that she had taken a step downwards, and their attitude was one of profound commiseration. Naturally, she took no pains to keep such friends around her, and felt relieved rather than otherwise, when, one by one, they fell away.

The Ingrams evidently belonged to that class of people who are persistently unlucky. Disaster and loss drove them from their home in New South Wales. Under other skies, Fortune might be more *kind.* They began life afresh on their New Zealand farm.

Here they found things in the rough, pretty much as they had been from the beginning. Briggs had been too romantic and poetical to do much on the land. He had dreamed over his work, pausing while he was driving his cattle into the stock-yard to contemplate a wonderful effect of clouds floating over the distant range: climbing a hill, with no object in view except the fine prospect to be had from the top: and standing by the creek with folded arms for an hour at a time, watching the limpid waters go by. Accordingly, the farm which he left behind him was in what an experienced agriculturist would have described as a disgracefully slovenly condition. Briggs had begun to fence, and had never finished; he had begun to bridge the creek, and had failed to reach the middle; he had thought of beginning to cultivate, and had left a plough stuck in the ground. People who did not understand that his soul was filled with poetry, to the exclusion of everything practical, reproached Briggs, and held him up to public execration as the idlest man in the district.

It was a midsummer afternoon, and Ingram was following the creek upwards, towards the scarped cliffs on the crest of the range. In the narrow gorge the sun's rays struck fiercely downward, and the heated air was as the blast from an oven. He was glad to walk close to the stream, and gladder still when, entering the thick bush, the trees bent above in arches of cool shade, and the water no longer flashed back the sunlight.

In the rainy season the stream was both wide and deep, but now, shrunken by summer drought, it scarcely covered half its pebbly bed. Ingram stooped to pick up some of the water-worn stones, smoothed and polished as on a lathe. They were quartz; little as he knew of mineralogy, he could tell that. Along the creek there were places where the dark-coloured rock was streaked with veins of this same quartz. He had often chipped pieces of it out, and had fancied that amongst its crystals he detected minute specks of gold. To his uneducated eye, the stone seemed identical with what they were breaking out in many of the mines, and crushing at the batteries.

"Well, Mr. Ingram—prospecting a bit?" shouted someone above him.

He started and looked up. Polcraft was watching him from the bank of the stream. There was an old road here—a tramway leading to an abandoned saw-mill higher up the creek.

"I don't know that I can call it prospecting," Ingram answered. "I was picking up these stones. Nothing in them, I suppose?"

"Can't say; haven't looked them all over yet. If you go right to the head of the creek, you'll maybe find where I first struck my pick in, and found gold and lost it, all on the same day. Curious: but I could never hit the exact spot again. You see, I'd had an accident—slipped down a steep place, and fell amongst the stones in the creek, considerably smashed up, my arm and my leg broken. Oh, the pain! dragging myself on bit by bit. My bones 'ud be there now if some of the other fellows hadn't found me, and carried me out of the bush. I laid up for repairs; it was months before I could go out again. When I went to try to find that place I'd spotted, things seemed altered somehow. Never seen it from that day to this."

"Then you never got any gold near this place?"

"Not enough to gild a butterfly's wing. There's one thing always puzzles me about this country. When first I came, we'd find the colour almost everywhere. You might stop all along the creek sides, and wash out a pan here and a pan there, and see the bright specks all through. But try to find them now: you can't do it!"

"I suppose you old hands have got it all," said Ingram, with a laugh.

"My belief is," said Polcraft, "that we've just about collected all that sort of gold, except what's washed into them mud-banks in the harbour. There's millions there! It's been proved, you know, that it's in the water—'in solution,' the professor would say. Someone made a calculation how much there was in every gallon of one of these here creeks. It's emptied into the sea every minute—a nice fortune dribbled away every day of our lives. Think of that, now! It's almost enough to make a man leave off drinking water, and put in tubs to settle."

"So there's gold in this clear water," said Ingram: "gold in the sand, gold washing into the sea, day after day? You ask where it goes to. It's more important, I think, to know where it comes from."

"Just what I've always said!" Polcraft came nearer, and spoke more emphatically: "Man, this country's full of gold! Don't you believe them as says it's worked out; we've only been scratching on the surface, like. You won't find it lying loose on the top now—too many sharp eyes about; but deep down in the bowels of the earth there's masses of it—reefs such as you and I have never set eyes on."

"Yes, just where we can't get to them," said Ingram.

"I've always had a great idea, you know," continued Polcraft, "of that great split in the range. As I say, the bowels of the earth aren't easy to be got to, but you're nearer them there than in most other places. If I was you, I should fossick about there. Where a mountain's been cut in two and turned upside down, it's likely that some stuff which isn't usually uncovered should have come to the top."

The old miner having passed on his way, whistling cheerily, Ingram still kept to the upward path, and presently entered the clearing where stood the abandoned saw-mill before mentioned. The creek had been dammed across higher up, but the dam had given way; the water-race was broken down, and the cumbrous wooden wheel turned no longer. Beneath this, a tree-fern had sprung up, thrusting its fronds of delicate green through the openings of the wheel. The whole building was ruinous—the roof black with moss, the rotten shingles crumbling away, the doors and windows broken in. Around were the deserted homes of the workmen. Some of these rough-built cottages were still in good repair, and in one place traces remained of a garden—patches of blue and white iris, the fragile half-transparent flowers swaying in the wind, and a rose-bush, cropped a hundred times by wild cattle, but still blossoming in defiance of evil fortune. Amongst the rank grass and fern were beds of mint, which, as Ingram trampled upon it, filled the warm air with its aromatic perfume.

Brushing his way through the overgrown path, he entered one of the houses. Here he found the pick and shovel he was accustomed to keep in this place, and, shouldering them, again took the road leading up the creek.

It narrowed more and more, and the banks grew steeper, so that with difficulty he found foothold between the roots of the trees. Great boulders filled the bed of the stream, which eddied and whirled between them, and often he came to a fall where the water leaped from slippery ledges of black rock into deep pools beneath. He heard the rush of these cascades long before he reached them, and from streams more remote came a low murmuring sound, which served to remind him how absolute was the stillness, and the place how lonely.

The Sentinels were close at hand. No road nor track remained; the banks, steeper than ever, were one mass of impenetrable vegetation: tree on tree, knotted, twisted, and tied together. He walked in the bed of the stream, amongst stones and snags of dead trees. All at once this way came to an end. The gorge was closed by a barrier of stone, which, like a bridge, united the two Sentinels. Before him was a still, deep pool, on whose further side tons on tons of boulders had fallen from the cliff, and were piled together in an immense heap, like the moraine of a glacier. The water gushed from a deep cleft above the pool, and higher, higher, from the very edge of the dark wall outlined against the sky, another stream shot like a silver arrow downwards, to join the one he had followed to this place.

For a while he stood looking on this scene of wild beauty, noticing the rapid fall of the water, the rich green of the ferns that fringed the pool, the grandeur of the forest growth, and the stern weather-beaten rocks that over-topped the highest trees.

"This must be Polcraft's split in the range," he thought, with a smile. "It's too remarkable to escape notice; but there's no sign of anyone having tried here for gold."

Several times he had paused to examine the rock laid bare in the deep-cut gorge of the stream. He knew nothing about rocks or the different formations; he was profoundly ignorant of minerals, even some of the

commonest; but he felt he was sure of quartz when he saw it, and had a vague idea that amongst all its glittering counterfeits he would know gold. Crossing the stream on a ledge of rock, he walked close to the face of the cliff, the spray falling on him as he stood. The sun broke through a cloud, and rainbow tints were mingled with the mist before the falling water. From a thousand points the wet and glistening rock flashed back the sunshine. Only one substance could glow like that beneath its rays.

Excitedly he pushed forward, clambering higher on the boulders. There it was—a quartz reef, banding the darker stone with a stripe of greyish-white. And all through, so far as he could tell, and wherever he chipped and struck off fragments, was the colour that he sought—streaks and patches of gleaming yellow. He laughed aloud, and started as the echo brought back the sound—started, and turned to make sure that no one was near.

"Who would have thought I should ever be so lucky," he asked himself, "while men whose trade it is to look for gold must have passed this scores of times? But Polcraft is right; it's nothing but a lottery, in which one man has as good a chance as another."

He broke out more of the stone, carrying it to a little flat beside the pool, and piling it there. Absorbed in his work, he never noticed how far the day had sped until the sun dipped behind the trees, and the deepening shadows and the cry of night-birds in the bush warned him that darkness was at hand. He gathered up his tools, and in the summer twilight followed again the winding stream downwards to his home.

"EXCITEDLY HE PUSHED FORWARD."

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

THREE times a week the settlement was gladdened by the arrival of the steamer from Auckland—an event of no small importance in the minds of the inhabitants of this remote village. In very dull times it had been the only occurrence worthy of note, and people had hung their hopes on it, looking forward continually to the next steamer as the destined messenger of good. Something would surely happen—such and such persons would come, such and such tidings be received. Alas! like most things on the face of this globe, that next steamer many a time was freighted only with disappointment.

However, on Friday's steamer—the same which had borne him away on Monday—Burrit was returning. Most of the passengers were, like himself, homeward bound. There were only four strangers: one an old lady, greatly disappointed because, after all her anxiety and careful preparation, she had not been sea-sick; the second a book-agent, who hugged his specimen copy to himself as if only death should part them, and who talked incessantly of the same precious volume; the third a commercial traveller, who, if possible, talked more than the book agent, but, having greater variety in his choice of subjects, was not quite so wearisome. The fourth stranger did not talk at all, and for this reason, doubtless, Burrit selected him as a person likely to be a good listener, and, as he was apt to do when dealing with new acquaintances, fell into an account of the fine old times, when all the batteries were running night and day, all the claims paying dividends, and all the hotels driving a roaring trade.

"And yet it's hardly possible that the field is

worked out," said the stranger. He was a man of a quiet slow utterance; but he had keen-looking grey eyes, and a face which, besides being open and candid, in its expression had a thoughtful, serious cast.

"No," said Burrit. "It's about half-begun. One trouble with us is that we want a better system of treating the ores. In the old days, when they were crushing out the rich patches, men didn't bother themselves about losing an ounce or two to the ton. But now, you see, we find that if we really wish to develop the resources of the district we must do the thing scientifically. The bulk of the stone isn't so loaded with gold that we can afford to let it be thrown away in the tailings. And deep sinking ought to be tried in most of the mines; and that needs a long way more capital than we've got. But perhaps you're not interested in mining."

"I know a little about it," said the stranger modestly.

"There's not much doing here now, but I hope we shall see a break in the cloud before long. We've agents in London trying to dispose of some of the mines to English companies. The shareholders in the 'Arion' sold out some time since, and the mine was started again last week, after it had been closed for eighteen months."

"Ah, indeed!" said the other. "Of course, nothing can be done without capital. Quartz-reefing on a large scale is an expensive business. I don't know why English capital shouldn't be as well employed in working your mines as in getting up foreign loans."

"Much better employed," said Burrit. "Keep the money in the family, I say. May I ask if you're going to spend some time amongst us?"

"Oh, I'm here on a long visit," said the stranger, with a smile.

"If you wish to see something of our mines—and most people do who come here—I think I can be of use to you. I'm not so deep in the business as I once was; but I've still an interest in one or two claims that are kept going. I can give you a letter to the managers, or go with you myself."

"Thank you," said the stranger slowly, and, it seemed to Burrit, very indifferently. "I shall, of course, try to see as much as possible of the mines and the different kinds of ore they're working. I understand there's a fine field for anyone who cares to study the best mode of treatment."

"Well, I suppose we shall soon have someone here who's an authority in such matters. I heard to-day that the Diadem Company, who are putting up extensive works—batteries, smelting furnaces, and all that—have engaged the services of a Mr. Logan, who's a great reputation as an assayer and mining expert. He learned his business in America; but he's been in most of the great mining cities. I hope he'll smarten us all up, as a regular Yankee, sharp and cute, ought to do."

"I don't think there's much of the Yankee about him," said the other drily. "I hope it's possible for a man to be smart in his business without having graduated at an American institution."

"Do you know him?" inquired Burrit.

"Yes, rather! I'm no American; but I may say, 'I guess' I do know him."

"Oh, I see," said Burrit, laughing. "I beg your pardon, Mr. Logan."

"What for? For telling me that I've a great reputation? That's a compliment which may not come my way again."

The steamer was now almost at the wharf, and Mr. Logan's attention was drawn to the white buildings that lined the shore and their dark back-ground of hills. "So this is your settlement?" he said. "A pretty place; but there doesn't seem to be much life in it."

"It doesn't live; it vegetates," said Burrit.

"I suppose there's a decent hotel," said his new acquaintance. "I was recommended to one kept by a man called Burrit—a quiet, respectable house."

"You couldn't very well be recommended to any other," said Burrit, "for it happens to be the only one that's running now. As for the man called Burrit, I'm particularly well acquainted with him—so now, Mr. Logan, we can cry quits. If you're going to my house, come along with me. Never mind your luggage; I'll send down for that."

"Oh, so you are Mr. Burrit?" said Logan, laughing in his turn. "Certainly I'm going to your house; but I'll see after my luggage myself. I always do. I've some apparatus that needs delicate handling."

They walked from the wharf together. The street was as quiet and as untroubled by traffic as usual, while the only person visible about the hotel was the doctor, seated on the balcony, a novel upside down on his knee, the telescope in his hand. He pointed it at Burrit and his companion as soon as they came in sight.

"I never could understand the fascination looking through a telescope has for that young man," observed Burrit. "He's our doctor; but as very few of us ever are ill, and as one-half of those are too economical to engage anyone to cure them, his office is pretty nearly a sinecure."

"He doesn't look as if times were very lively," said Logan, following his host into the hotel.

The doctor, in fact, was looking very glum and dispirited. At dinner, the reason of his profound melancholy became apparent.

"How is that poor fellow Simcox?" asked Burrit.

"Simcox? He'll be going to his work again very soon," said the doctor.

"What!" exclaimed Burrit. "Why, I thought you said he wasn't likely to survive the operation."

"There's been no operation," said the doctor shortly. "There's not going to be any."

"But I thought you said it couldn't be avoided; his legs were so fearfully crushed?"

"So they were," the doctor replied. "I told him they would have to come off, and he seemed to have made up his mind to it. Man was weak and low; would have agreed to anything. Next time I went, he was furious; ordered me off; swore abominably; said he'd much rather die than have the amputation

performed. Told him the consequences; said he didn't care for life without his legs. Went again next day, and next, expecting to find him in an awful state. To my surprise, rather better. Went yesterday; still going on all right. To-day; hardly believe my own eyes. Man almost well! Never was so deceived in my life."

"Well, cheer up! the mistake's on the right side," said Burrit. "You ought to be thankful."

"So I am. But a mistake is a mistake, whatever side it's on. Feel annoyed; don't like to find I've been all wrong. To be abused too, as I've been, by Simcox and his wife—and which was worst I don't know—is trying. Only anxious to do my best for the man. Curious case!" he muttered to himself as he opened the French window and stepped on the verandah, where, for a long time, he paced up and down, wrapped in meditation.

The new lodger, Mr. Logan, had gone upstairs, and was considering the rooms assigned to him: a sitting-room and bed-chamber opening on the balcony. He had unpacked his books and microscope, and was trying to find a suitable place for them. There was a small book-case in the room, but it was filled with a strange mixture of novels, poems, and school-books. One name he found written on the title-page of almost every book he opened: Amy Burrit. "Mrs. or Miss Burrit?" he said to himself. "Probably Miss; the dates are recent." And he remembered how, just before coming upstairs, he had glanced down the long dimly-lighted passage, and had seen, standing at the further end, a tall, slim girl, black-browed and dark-haired; and even in that moment had been struck by the look of patient tiredness on the face, which, without regarding him, was turned in his direction. She was not a servant, for she appeared to be giving orders to a stout, strong-armed woman, who was unmistakably the maid-of-all-work, and who had shown him to his rooms.

Mr. Logan deposited his own books on the floor, having first covered the table three deep, setting the microscope in the middle of this entrenchment, and removing the flowers which had occupied that place to the mantel-shelf. "Miss Amy again, I suppose," he thought to himself. "Quite an old-fashioned nosegay." Flowers had been more uncommon than silver or gold at Broken Hill, the last place of mines he had sojourned in; and after a moment he brought the glass bowl of roses back again, and made room for it, relegating the rest of the books to the floor. The faint scent of the flowers wafted through the room, as now and then the light breeze flapped the blind against the open window. Moths fluttered in from the darkness to circle round the lamp; in the street below someone was whistling "Ehren on the Rhine," while from the bar downstairs there had been one and the same sound for the last half-hour: a drawling, monotonous voice that never paused, an old man telling his favourite story for the hundredth time. "My word! it was a near case," Logan heard him say. "Such things as that, Mr. Burrit, have been known to turn a man's hair grey in one night."

Lower and fainter was the sound of another voice from the room beneath his own. It was a woman's voice, and she was reading aloud. Nothing else could be heard except the clatter of crockery from the kitchen, where the servant was finishing her long day's work, and the measured step of the doctor, still tramping the verandah. If stagnation and quiet mean respectability, thought Logan, this hotel is the *most* respectable I ever knew.

In the room beneath Amy was reading to her mother. Mrs. Burrit was not too feeble to read to herself; but it was easier and pleasanter to lie back in her cushioned chair, and listen to someone else. That her daughter might be tired, or might wish to spend the time in some other way, never occurred to her. Any other person might have noticed the signs of weariness in her voice, which failed sometimes, and grew weak and husky; in her pale face and heavy eyes; but Mrs. Burrit was too much engrossed with her own symptoms to be observant of another's weakness. "That will do, Amy," she said at last. "I don't care to hear any more of it."

"I don't think it's very interesting," said Amy, struggling against a yawn.

"You are always so sleepy," said her mother. "I hope you don't sit up late in your own room."

"Oh dear, no! I am only too glad to get to bed as soon as possible."

"Then I wonder you are not rested. I didn't hear you well to-night: you spoke so indistinctly."

"Did I? I thought I was shouting almost. It seems so difficult to keep one's voice clear and distinct for any length of time. I really must get some voice jujubes."

"Well, is the reading over for to-night?" said Burrit, coming in. "I've hardly had time to say a word to you since I got home. Ten o'clock, is it? I must go and shut up the bar; it might as well never have been opened; but we go through these things now as a matter of form."

He went out, followed by Amy.

"Did you manage as well in town as you expected?" she ventured to ask.

"Rather better, I think," said Burrit. "Don't worry about these affairs, Amy. I never do. They'll come right in time. If not, then I must do as others have done: go through the Court, put a sponge across the slate, and start afresh."

"Oh, father, not that, surely!"

"My dear, better men than I have had to do it—so many, in fact, that it's rather singular not to be in with the crowd. Mind," he said, noticing the distressed look on the girl's face, "I don't say things are so bad as that yet. Something may turn up by and by; what's that song I hear you sing sometimes? 'When night is darkest, dawn is nearest.' Keep that in your mind. I'll struggle through somehow."

END OF CHAPTER THE THIRD.

A TRIP TO JUPITER'S MOONLET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ALERIEL; OR, A VOYAGE TO OTHER WORLDS," ETC.

"WHAT A STRANGE SCENE WAS THEN OPENED TO OUR WONDERING EYES!"

WHEN we were passing through space from that mighty world—the hugest of the children of the Sun—the great planet Jupiter, we came near one of the moonlets that roll around his satellites. In the great universe you know there are nine classes of worlds at least. (1) The central sun; (2) the primary suns, such as our own, and Vega and Aldebaran; (3) the secondary suns, such as the attendants on the double stars; (4) the great worlds—like Jupiter; (5) the minor worlds—such as this earth or Venus; (6) the little world or planetoids; (7) the satellites like your moon, and the satellites of Jupiter or Saturn or Uranus; and then (8) the satellites of satellites, the little moonlets of the moons. Lastly are the meteors, the tiny worldlets, like the insects of the heavens, swarming in space in countless millions.

It was to this moonlet that we now approached. A tiny world—it was smaller than even Phobos, the little moon of the planet Mars. An English county would more than contain its whole surface—London would more than have covered it altogether (from pole to equator, and equator to pole) with houses. It seemed first like a glittering star close to the great moon of which it was a satellite. Nearer and nearer we approached it, till it grew to a globe in space. Then the moonlet seemed covered with large rocks of many forms and fantastic shapes. The elements were there as on the earth, and in the mighty sun and throughout the solar system: iron and calcium, and salt and magnesium piled up in divers rocks, just as on the wilder regions of the earth.

We drew nearer to it, and suffered the force of gravitation to draw us towards it—though here that force was fourfold. (1) That of Jupiter; (2) that of the parent moon; (3) that of the distant far-off sun (parent of all); and lastly, that of the moonlet. As one drew near it grew into manifestly what it was—a tiny world; the globe rose like a mountain, from the equator. But that equator was no plain, but stood out in infinite space.

Nearer we drew to its rocky surface. The clefts in the rocks and the gorges opened up, and the fantastic rocks rose as miniature mountains on its surface. The point we made for was a tiny plain some forty degrees from the North Pole—that is, a region on that little world, situated not unlike the relative position of England or Germany on your earth. At length our aërial machine struck its surface gently, for we slackened its force of impact. We descended on its surface. It was a plain of a few acres, enclosed with rocks like miniature mountains. The sun was shining with the dim light usual in the far regions of Jupiter when we arrived, but very soon the rotation of the little globe brought on the night. What a strange scene was then opened to our wondering eyes!

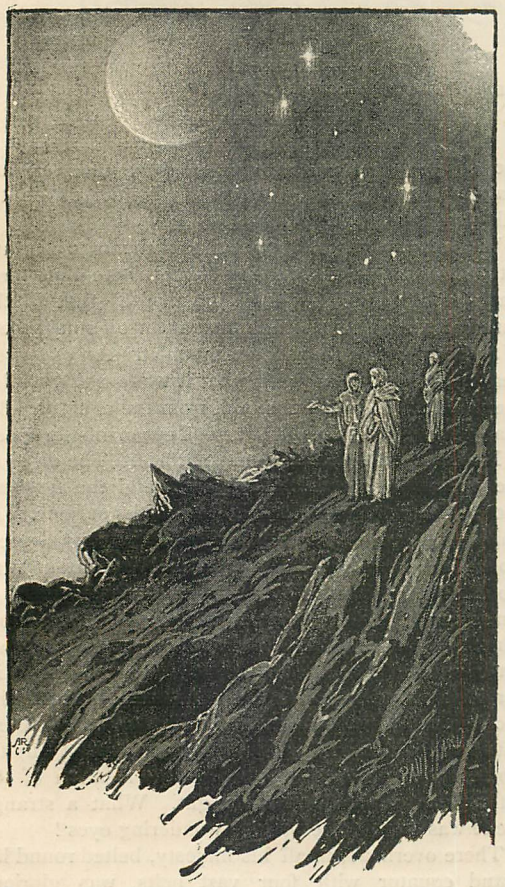
There overhead, in all his majesty, belted round his grand equator with four vast belts, was glorious Jupiter, more than a hundred times the size of

your full moon. He shone superbly in the heavens, giving many times the light of the moon upon the earth. But besides that, there was real moonlight there, and moonlight not only brighter, but more varied than that of earth. The parent moon of the moonlet, being so much nearer, shone with a splendour little less than Jupiter himself. Then there were the three other distant moons, each as grand as earth's moon in varied phases—one a crescent, another a half-moon, and a third in the full.

We rested in silent contemplation of the glorious sight. Then one of my comrades broke the silence:

"How wonderful and glorious are God's works! Here in this little world, where everything is so small on its surface, what glories are manifested in its heavens! Let us wait here, and watch the changing phases of Jupiter and his moons."

If the first sight was wonderful, the successive changes we beheld was like a colossal pyrotechnic display, but one which has gone on for countless ages. Slowly each moon passed through its phases, and slowly its dark portions grew enlightened, and then faded away into the darkness. Slowly even huge Jupiter himself assumed the gibbous, the half-moon, and the crescent forms. No hour was quite like its predecessor. All changed their phases far more rapidly than the earth's moon does; and so one felt the changes and the grand solemn motion of those orbs in space. It was as a colossal orrery.



"IT WAS A STRANGE SENSATION TO WALK FROM DAY INTO NIGHT."

Not only the forms, but the colours varied, for the moons were not all of one colour. Sometimes the silver light of the planet prevailed, sometimes the great blue moon shone over all—shining as a blue light dominating all; sometimes this was varied in shady places by the red, and sometimes by the yellow moon. It was a glorious spectacle—the like of which the eye of man has never rested on. The starry heavens were ornamented with mighty orbs moving visibly in space, enlightening the little world with more than moonlight of divers colours, but only suffering the stars of the first magnitude to be seen.

Eclipses were constantly varying the sky; sometimes the great moon itself was eclipsed by mighty Jupiter, sometimes its lesser comrades came near, and then the change of shapes was wonderful, from full to half, and then to crescent, and then the darkened orbs—just visible in the sky by Jupiter light.

Day was almost as wonderful as night. The sun, though weak in comparison to what you know on earth, still shone brightly enough to drown the other lights, but yet the mighty orbs were more clearly visible in the heavens than the moon is on a sunny day.

We walked over this little world in every part. It was a strange sensation to walk from day into night (only a few miles were sufficient to do it), and then into light, or rather into variegated Jupiter light and moonlight again, to make a short excursion from the North Pole to the equator, and to feel all the time the constant rotation of the tiny world. Some of the walks over rock and gorge and gulley would to men on earth have been trying, but were less so to us, although there was no atmosphere for flight. The pull also of extraneous gravitation—*i.e.*, the pull upwards of the parent moon and of huge Jupiter himself—made one feel light, and one could leap over lofty obstacles and rocks. Every part of the little world was soon explored, and then we rested on our plain, and watched the magnificent spectacle of the heavens and the huge orbs, ever changing in form, rolling above us. How marvellous they seemed in their grandeur!

We dwelt many days on this little world, and contemplated its scenes. Its surface contained few wonders. Life had been there, but it was gone, and only barren rocks varied its surface. It must have been a strange life in a world so tiny and so light in its gravitating power. But it had passed away, and now the little world was a desert.

At length we held a consultation on our plain. More time had been spent here than we could well spare on our long voyage through the wonders of the solar system, but the superb spectacles of that wondrous varied moonlight had fascinated us. We decided now, after a rest of some twelve of earth's days, to launch forth into space again, and to behold God's many wondrous works in other greater worlds beyond. So we mounted our ether ship, and again darted forth into space to behold Creation's marvels in the vast universe beyond.

ALERIEL.

CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.—WHAT TO WEAR IN DECEMBER.

I.—FROM OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENT.

THE approach of Christmas makes us bethink ourselves of fur. There is nothing warmer or more comfortable when the cold weather sets in, but it is necessary to take weight into consideration and the present style of the three-quarter cloak materially assists our efforts in that direction. The initial vignette shows the very latest make of sealskin mantle. It falls, you see, well below the knees and is somewhat a replica of the fur capes worn by our grandmothers. It opens, if you notice, like the Russian circulars, for the hands to pass through, but to not more than three-quarters of the depth, so there is no fear of the cold being unduly admitted. It is gathered very full on the shoulders and the high collar turns down with a sort of revers in the front. One of its many merits is that it can be slipped on and off in a moment. The hat is made of similar fur and has a low, flat cloven crown with an upturned brim.

Sealskin has become so costly, that many women will be deterred from buying it. Manufacturers, ever on the alert, are bringing out some excellent woven plushes, so closely resembling sealskin that it is difficult to tell the one from the other. There is also a Mexican seal which is a veritable skin, but not equal in texture to the best kinds, and naturally it will not last so long, but it has a very good appearance, and will stand a vast amount of wear and tear. It should not, however, be allowed to get wet, nor indeed should any kind of sealskin, for it has always been dyed, and wet will not improve it. I admire this style of cloak in our picture much more than some other fashionable shapes. For example, the cloaks made with a fur yoke and a deep flounce of fur gathered round it, gives a bunchy and inelegant appearance to the wearer. In the long jackets and long travelling coats sleeves are introduced of completely distinct fur, and for this purpose sable is in favour, and mink for those with more slender purses. Cloth jackets and coats have these fur sleeves which match the large Russian roll collars generally introduced upon them. Fur boas and feather boas will be much worn and so will feather capes, but the latter are larger than formerly and are becoming a more important garment, reaching to the waist and often below it. They are always made high on the shoulders and generally with high collars.

There has rarely been a season with a greater choice of charming materials which have been brought out to suit all tastes. Those who like smooth cloths can wear them, and be in the fashion, and nothing lasts better or are more ladylike than the fine faced cloths of various colourings, either braided or trimmed with fur. I find that the tailors are principally using brown and drab tones, but petunia greys, heliotropes and dark greens are well worn also and many tones of red ; the most fashionable having a bricky tinge. The latest introduction rejoices in the objectionable name of "ox blood red," but its tint is prettier than its name and it looks extremely well braided in black. For the smooth cloths I recommend to your notice the

FAREWELL.

make of a dress worn by one of the figures in our illustration. The skirt is of the usual umbrella shape, which means that it is cut with only one seam, the width of the material forming the depth of the skirt. It is fitted to the waist with almost as much care as a bodice, and the seam at the back is joined on the cross, giving a sort of fantail effect. To be effective it should rest on the ground, but this length is not at all advisable for useful wear in the country, as it necessitates holding up the dress. It is on that account that so much more attention is being paid to petticoats which are often made of brocaded silk or satin, trimmed with pinked-out silk flounces covered with black lace. The dress in our picture is of stone-coloured cloth, and is ornamented round the hem with black, which turns upwards in points or pryamids and is sufficiently deep to be effective. The bodice fastens invisibly, and is drawn across the bust in soft folds. At the throat there is a graduated necklet of jet, and the junction of bodice and skirt is hidden by a jet trimming, commencing from under the arm and uniting in front in shape not unlike a Bolero jacket. From this falls a graduated belt of jet, deep in front and narrowing on the hips. It is one of the newest introductions in the way of trimmings this winter. There is a great disposition to return to the coat sleeve as we see it here, only slightly raised on the shoulder, and having a band cuff at the wrist. Fur is much employed for trimmings on dresses, and it generally takes the form of a couple of narrow bands carried round the skirt and introduced jacket fashion on the bodice.

But rough and figured materials are newer than the plain-faced cloths. I recommend to the notice of all those who desire a strong wearing gown, combined with a good-looking one, the thick coarse make of serge, which is now much worn. Grey checked waistcoats, and all those curious checked cloths which rejoice in the name of "Tattersall" because, I suppose, they resemble horse cloth, are used for waistcoats with black coarse serge costumes. Black waistcoats as well as blue and other tints as well as white are used with the now fashionable brown, but besides these plain-toned serges there are many bordered materials being worn, with rough edges or rough selvedges, which form trimmings, and many zebra-striped cloths and others with interwoven rings, as in the other dress illustrated here. The effect of this in the present instance is enhanced by a mixture of plain white cloth ; the tint of the dress in the model being cinnamon brown, the effect is elegant and simple. The straight band collar is not too high, the pointed bodice opens on one side, showing a little bit of white which is toned down by the straps of cord of graduated length which fasten over it. The white panel at the side of the skirt has similar cords across, and this is the only trimming to the otherwise plain skirt. There is an added basque starting from each side of the point of the bodice, which is not too deep but gives the impression of flap pockets. This only needs a good figure, and the costume is not at all difficult to reproduce.

A word or two more as to petticoats. This is a season when we need warmth, and the new flannel petticoats give it with a minimum of weight, for they are made of a novel fleecy wool in very light shades which are of feather weight. They are generally scalloped and worked at the hem which is headed with the new chenille embroidery. I use the term "chenille" because this is what the manufacturers call it, but indeed it does not look at all like it. It resembles leaves cut out of a stiff woollen plush and appliquéd on the flannel. It is of the same colour as the ground and is very durable. It makes a pretty trimming also for flannel dressing-gowns. Those who can afford them wear shot and plain glacé silk petticoats with pinked-out flounces, but they wear out in a couple of months. Plain woollen petticoats are often lined with flannel or wash leather, and so are richly embroidered satins. The brocades are, however, more luxurious, but quilted Italian cloth looks almost as well as satin, at half the cost, and lasts twice as long. It is frequently trimmed with silk flouncings and lace.

II.—FROM OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.

THE French capital is suffering from a bad attack of Russomania, with the result that it is hardly possible to wear too much fur, but this is not the only form which the mania takes. Bodices are being cut like those worn by the Russian peasantry, and the curious, quaint red-woollen brocades, associated on the stage with the Russian habits, have been utilised for cloaks which are so ample and voluminous it is impossible to tell what the dress is beneath them. Of course this mantle is lined with fur, and has a roll collar which well covers the shoulders, and furthermore is adorned with as much gold braid as the Czar would care to wear at his coronation. And yet with all this there is much severe simplicity in the fashions of the day. Skirts are becoming severely simple, and the one aim would seem to be to diminish their size at the waist as much as possible and increase them in proportion at the foot. Pleatings and gatherings at the waist are going out of date, and the desired effect is produced by goring. Princess shapes have come back to us, and you can hardly have a better illustration than the dress in our picture, which gives much apparent width to the bust, and renders the waist to all appearance infinitesimally small. The skirt is most carefully gored, a black piping being introduced at every seam. The only other trimming is a deep band of fox fur at the foot, which makes the skirt look wider. Narrow bands of similar fur form a point in the centre of the waist, and descend to the pockets, which are secured by three buttons. In the collar there is an indication of Russian modes, for at the top of the straight collar-band there is another one of fur, reaching close up under the chin, proving most becoming to slender throats. The sleeves form one puff to the elbow, and then are tight to the wrist, being edged with a band of fur. The hat, which is of velvet, shows exactly how very high feathers are worn at the back. The favourite shape for ostrich is the Prince of Wales's plume, and this appears in many forms. You will see the effect of it in the companion figure. It is placed on the hat

there in the rear of a liberal display of flowers, the hat itself being a mere flat circle of felt, embroidered at the edge and bent into any shape needed. The dress worn by this figure has the new and favourite coat, and I think you will agree with me that it is decidedly smart. The basques which reach below the knee are attached to the bodice at the waist line, and are trimmed all round with three old-fashioned folds of satin. The folds and *rouleaux* in which our grandmothers delighted, when they wore short and scanty skirts, have come back to their degenerate descendants. The jacket fastens with three straps and gold buttons on the left side, and the wide *incroyable* revers are secured with gold buttons. There is a little pointed vest of a lighter shade, but the collar and deep gauntlet cuffs are of velvet. The skirt is of striped silk of the same light shade as the vest, and has a gathered flounce at the hem. Both these dresses are of the butcher-blue tone, which is very much worn in Paris now.

Leather is being used for waistcoats and for trimming dresses. The untanned skins are carefully matched with the gloves, and sometimes worked all over with fine gold cord. They soil easily, but cannot be worn out. Bands of leather border some of the skirts, and appear to be nailed on to them with metal discs, but more usually the leather simply binds the hem, and is carried up inside the skirt.

I am wondering whether you, in England, will adopt the French bonnets in their entirety. Some of them are mere circles with snail-like rows of gold braid or cord on the surface, and an enormous tuft of upstanding feathers at the back. The hats grow larger and larger, and more fantastic in their shape. Many of them are covered tightly with velvet, which is one colour outside and another in, the edge bordered with cord. But it is difficult to calculate the amount of feathers which a hat of this kind can often be made to display. They require arranging with rare skill or they appear vulgar.

Flowers are few and far between, but large bows of very wide ribbon often cover the entire top of the hat, and in nine cases out of ten the ribbon is shaded. The shaded effects in silks and velvets as well as chiffons play an important part in Parisian dress. Comparatively little of these ombré fabrics is imported to England. Shaded ribbons very frequently are made into revers for woollen gowns, and many a dainty little Parisian bonnet is tied with broad ribbon strings, for they are superseding the narrow ones we have been wearing of late.

Some of the leading milliners are trying to resuscitate the square lace veils, which used to be worn years ago, but they need the open-fronted bonnets, and some of these find favour in dark velvets with light velvet linings. They are not unbecoming and they are new. Americans have adopted them largely.

The richest brocades and the plainest fabrics are mostly cut on the cross for skirts, and the back of nearly every dress shows the cross-cut seam, but they need to be most carefully arranged.

Tulle evening gowns are being made up for the winter festivities in Paris, and some of the prettiest are embroidered and have artificial flowers let into the pattern.

The short Eton jacket has been adopted by the Parisiennes, but not with the same avidity as the short-waisted, double-breasted *incroyable* coat, with long coat tails often made in a completely different material from the skirt, but naturally in unison with it. If you have the opportunity of buying short lengths of good material do not lose it, the fashions of the day help you to utilise them to advantage. Sleeves are frequently dissimilar to the rest of the dress. Vests and waistcoats are introduced in contrast, and the style of skirt, which appears to be drawn up on one side over another, is much *à la mode*, for, truth to tell, Parisians find it a difficult matter to diversify skirts sufficiently, and there is nothing so obnoxious to fashion as monotony. Perhaps that is why the milliners have chosen so many curious additions to their usual stock of materials. Many of the smartest hats and bonnets have a jet swan in front, its neck proudly arched; tiny round spangles of every conceivable bronze hue are clustered together for bonnet crowns.

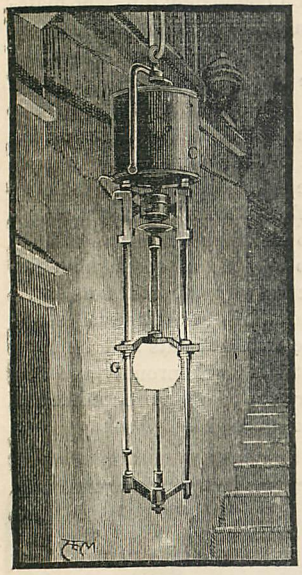
EXHAUSTED PATIENCE.

THE GATHERER:

AN ILLUSTRATED RECORD OF INVENTION, DISCOVERY, LITERATURE, AND SCIENCE.

Correspondents are requested, when applying to the Editor for the names and addresses of the persons from whom further particulars respecting the articles in the GATHERER may be obtained, to forward a stamped and addressed envelope for reply, and in the case of inventors submitting specimens for notice, to prepay the carriage. The Editor cannot in any case guarantee absolute certainty of information, nor can he pledge himself to notice every article or work submitted.

The Midget Arc Lamp.



This very small and compact electric arc lamp is shown in the figure, and will be found useful for lighting shops or small areas. It is of 250 candle power, and takes a current of five ampères at a pressure of forty-five volts. The carbon lasts six hours, and the arc is regulated by clock-work mechanism. The globe, G, is only three inches in diameter, and the effect is good. As glow lamps are so much more expensive than arc lamps, this midget lamp should be found very useful.

Wire Pillows.

Pillows of woven wire have been introduced for sanitary reasons. The pillow is springy and as the air circulates through it the head is kept cool. It is made of separate spirals of woven wire, united together, but each forming a spring in itself.

Photographing Speech.

M. Demeny, an assistant of M. Marey, who has analysed the movements of running horses and flying birds by means of chronophotography, hopes to introduce a new way of teaching and entertaining deaf mutes by means of a magic-lantern. He first photographs the lips of a person speaking, say a teacher or a lecturer, and then combines the successive pictures by the Zoëtrope so as to reproduce all the motions of the mouth on the screen. The deaf mutes, accustomed to read what a person says by the movement of his lips, are able to do the like from the photographic images.

A Colony of Moss Animals.

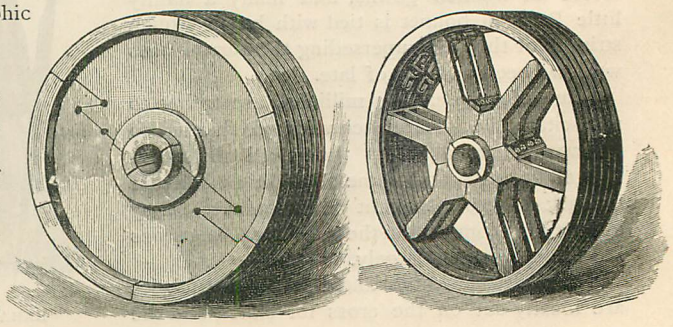
Moss animals—or Bryozoa, to give them their scientific name—are tiny aquatic creatures, forming branching or tree-like colonies. The fresh water species are usually found on the stems of milfoil or water-crowfoot, or spreading over submerged stones or brickwork. Generally speaking, the life of a colony begins in the spring: a staloblast—a minute lentil-shaped horny case, containing a bud—gradually opens and the free-swimming form partially emerges. When it finds a suitable place it settles down, and becomes the starting point of a new colony. The outer layer hardens, and forms a protecting tube, from the mouth of which the tiny occupant projects a waving crown of tentacles, and into which it can retire when it has captured its prey or on the approach of danger. The motion of the tentacles and of the minute hairs with which they are fringed creates a miniature whirlpool, down which the luckless animalcules are swept. No sooner is one individual fully developed than it commences to multiply by sending out a bud, the perfect double of itself; and the process is carried at the margins, even though some of the inner and older cells or tubes may have lost their occupant by death. But before the life-cycle is complete nearly all the fresh water species develop the staloblasts spoken of above, which are only set free by the decay or rupture of the tube of the parent-animal, and rarely develop till the following spring. One colony of Plumatella we have heard of which established itself on the side of a small aquarium early in September—probably owing to the warm weather. So far as we know, there is no similar case on record.

An Electromagnet for the Eye.

The electromagnet for removing iron sparks from the eye which we described in our October GATHERER (p. 699) is, we are desired to say, by a pure coincidence similar to the one introduced by Mr. Snell, of Sheffield, eleven years ago. The projecting collar of soft iron is stated to increase the attraction of the magnetic probe or point for the iron splint embedded in the eyeball.

Split-Wood Pulleys.

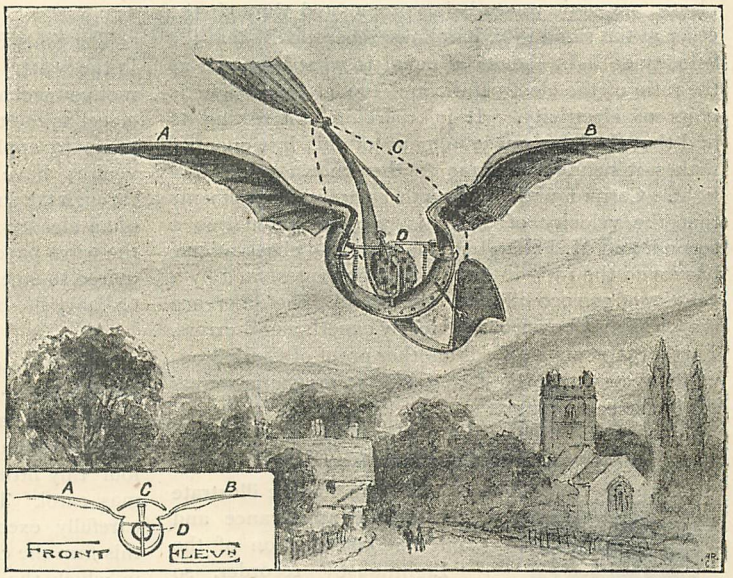
The pulleys shown in our engraving are coming into general use in America. They are built of maple-wood, the rims being composed of segments glued and nailed together. The bush grips the shaft so firmly that keys and set-screws are not wanted, and the pulley can be transferred to shafts of different dia-



meters. These "Gilbert" pulleys, as they are called, are only half the weight of iron pulleys, and are said to transmit from 30 to 50 per cent. more power with the same width of belt than iron pulleys.

A new Flying Machine.

The new flying machine, or "aviateur," recently brought before the Académie des Sciences, Paris, by M. Gustave Trouvé, is highly ingenious, and a new departure in aëronautics, but is only in its experimental stage. M. Trouvé believes that none of our existing motors—whether of steam, electricity, or compressed air—are capable of propelling a vehicle through the air, without the support of balloons or aëroplanes such as Mr. Maxim is now working at. In order to devise such a motor, he took up the principle of the Bourdon tube, which is employed as a manometer or pressure gauge. This tube is of a horseshoe form, and when filled with the gas whose pressure is to be measured, the points of the tube approach to or recede from each other according as the pressure of the gas falls or rises. M. Trouvé saw that he could transform the tube into a motor, by filling it with an inflammable mixture of hydrogen gas and common air, and exploding the mixture with proper cartridges fixed on a revolving barrel. At each explosion the pressure of the gas in the tube would fall, and the points of the tube approach, while on refilling the tube with gas between the explosions the points would recede. In this way a reciprocating motion of the points would be obtainable as long as the supply of hydrogen and the exploding cartridges lasted. To utilise this motion, he fastens an expanded artificial wing to each point of the tube; and these wings rise and fall as the points approach or recede, thus beating the air like a bird's wings. The aviateur or aviator is illustrated in Fig. 1, where the wings, A B, are seen attached to the points of the curving Bourdon tube; D is a reservoir of compressed hydrogen, and C is a small aëroplane, shown by dotted lines, and intended to act as a parachute, but which is removable. Fig. 2 represents a small model starting on its flight. The model is suspended by a cord from a bracket, and held in the position 1°, until the restraining tie A is burnt through by the flame of a candle. It then swings to the position 2, where the sustaining cord is also burnt through by the flame B. By this time the series of 12 cartridges with which it is provided have begun to explode at regular intervals, and the Bourdon tube to act. The aviator is now able to support itself in the air by the action of its wings, and even to mount upwards in its flight. The dozen cartridges are able to propel it from 75 to 80 mètres with air in the tube containing 25 per cent. of hydrogen. Only the hydrogen needs to be carried, the air being available all round. In practice, M. Trouvé proposes to make the tube of aluminium, which is a very light metal, and strong enough to resist the explosions.



A NEW FLYING MACHINE.—FIG. 1.

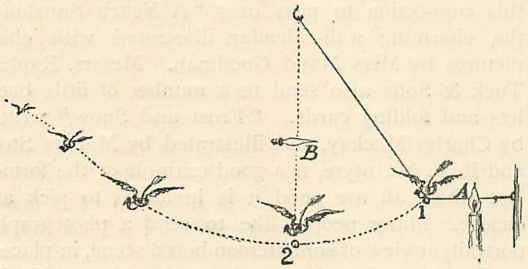


FIG. 2.

Electro-magnetic Photography.

Herr von Dobrynnski has discovered another confirmation of the electro-magnetic theory of light, or, in other words, that light and electro-magnetism are effects of a disturbance or wave-motion in the ether. He has found that waves of electro-magnetism, set up by the discharge of induction coils after the manner of Dr. Herz, are capable of affecting a sensitive plate and producing a photographic action like the waves of light. Dry plates of bromide of silver and gelatine, exposed to these electro-magnetic disturbances for three hours, were developed by ferric oxalate and hyposulphite, and found to be marked with bright and dark bands. When the plates were covered with tinfoil the effect was also obtained. If these electro-magnetic waves could be made small enough, they would, in all probability, be light itself. Light and

electro-magnetic waves being propagated through the ether at the same rate, it follows theoretically that the velocity of light should be equal to what is known as the ratio of the electrostatic and the electro-magnetic units of electricity. It is, therefore, interesting to find that the latest measurement of this last quantity makes it nearly the same as the known velocity of light. Cornu found by the most careful experiments that the velocity of light is 300,300 kilomètres a second, and M. Pellat, by equally careful observations, has found the ratio in question to be represented by a velocity of 300,900 kilomètres a second. The difference is such as may be accounted for by experimental errors. This measurement affords another proof of Clerk Maxwell's theory that light and electro-magnetic waves are of the same nature.

A Speed and Pressure Recorder.

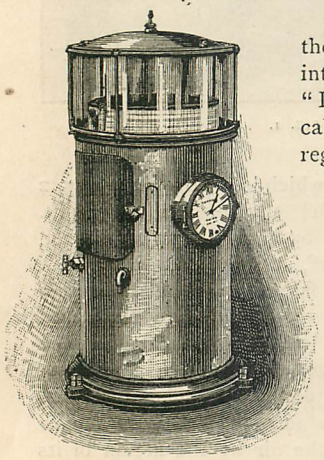


FIG. 1.

Our Figs. 1 and 2 illustrate the general appearance and internal construction of the "Lighthouse" recorder, so called from its shape. It registers on paper the fluctations of speed and steam pressure in an engine. As will be seen from Fig. 2, the paper is mounted on a drum, A, curved at the upper end of a spindle, B, sliding vertically, and rotating at a given speed by means of a wheel, C, and an arm, D. A cylindrical roller, E, has fixed on it a star wheel, F, formed with seven teeth, so that at each revolution of the wheel, C, it rotates through one-seventh of a revolution by means of a peg, G, fixed in C. On E a stepped rack is formed, with which a peg fixed to the spindle, B, engages, and the length of each of the steps is such that it corresponds with the depth to each day on the paper. The writing pen, H, is of glass and marks the paper in contact with it, being actuated by a lever, J, and the ball-float, L, supported in the vessel, M. The level of the water is varied according to the speed of the engine by a small fan driven from the latter and blowing on the water. The steam pressure is also registered in a similar way by means of a Bourdon tube actuating a second pen.

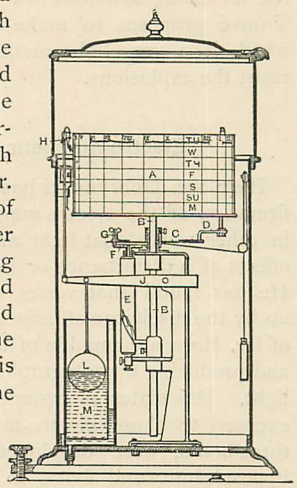


FIG. 2.

An Electric Life-boat.

The Sims-Edison torpedo is launched and propelled in the water by electricity, which is supplied to the motive mechanism by insulated wires, payed out from a reel as the torpedo advances. Mr. Edison now proposes to apply this principle to life-boats. The inventors have designed a boat which can be sent through the surf for miles up and down a coast by means of an electric motor on board, supplied with current by the wires payed out behind it. Only two men are required to steer the craft, which is as buoyant as the ordinary life-boats.

Some New Cards.

The largest Christmas card we have seen this season is a panel published by Messrs. Raphaël Tuck & Sons, and entitled "The Little Choristers." Mrs. Brundage is the artist, and she shows us four tiny little girls, barefooted, singing their Christmas carol. The panel is very prettily coloured and carefully executed. In the other cards issued by this firm the chief novelties are the "nodding" series, in which the principle, familiar from its application to Chinese figures, is brought into play again in cardboard. If space were available, it would be impossible to enumerate all the varied shapes that Messrs. Tuck & Sons' cards have been made to take this season. But, whatever the shape or size, the designs are always well chosen and admirably reproduced. As in former years, we must say a word in praise of the decorative and artistic little "Art Gem Calendars"; and it would be hardly fair in this connection to pass over "A Year's Sunshine," the charming wall-calendar illustrated with child-pictures by Miss Maud Goodman. Messrs. Raphael Tuck & Sons also send us a number of little booklets and folding cards. "Frost and Snow," written by Charles Mackay, and illustrated by Marcus Stone and R. F. McIntyre, is a good example of the former. But where all are good it is invidious to pick and choose. Many people like to send a photographic portrait, or view of some remembered scene, in place of a coloured card, and to facilitate this Messrs. Marion & Co. have reintroduced their mounts with appropriate mottoes, some of which are fitted with an ingenious arrangement for holding a mounted photograph.

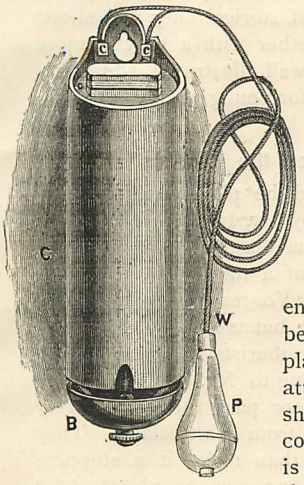
A New Train Signal.

A device for preventing engine drivers from running their trains in defiance of a signal set against them through carelessness or foggy weather has been introduced by an Edinburgh architect. It consists of an electric bell on the locomotive which rings when the signal is so set, and continues to ring until the danger signal is lowered. The bell is actuated by a current derived from a conductor laid along the line. A brush or rolling contact on the engine leads the current to the bell, and the current is sent into the conductor by the signalman in the act of setting the signal to "Danger." When the signalman lowers the signal the current is cut off, and the bell ceases to ring. By this arrangement the driver has no excuse for not applying the brakes in time.

Sanitary Handwriting.

The Supreme Council of Hygiene, in Austria, have been studying the relative advantages of upright or slanting characters in handwriting, and they have recommended that an upright hand should be taught in schools, because it is healthier for the penman. The slanting style causes the body and neck to twist, and is apt to produce spinal curvature.

A Dry Cell and Electric Bell.



Dry batteries are very useful in households, inasmuch as they do not require to be replenished with water from time to time, like the older liquid cells; hence some well-known German electricians, have introduced the combination which we illustrate. The cell, C, is enclosed in a case which can be fixed in any convenient place; and the bell, B, is attached to the bottom as shown. The bell-push, P, or contact for ringing the bell, is connected in the circuit of the battery and bell by a length of silk-covered copper wire, W, of tasteful appearance.

Christmas Cards and Gift Books.

When we think of the comparatively recent origin of Christmas cards, the development indicated by Messrs. Hildesheimer & Faulkner's publications is marvellous. In range of conception and delicacy of finish they are unsurpassed. It would not be possible to find two more beautiful designs than those by the late Alice Havers, reproduced in four-fold cards, and entitled, "Rose softly blooming," and "An old garden;" Mr. W. H. Groome's clowns, and Mr. H. P. Dollman's policemen are as irresistible in their humour as Miss Bebb's kittens—which is saying a good deal. Then as to shapes, straw hats are shown, filled with flowers, old books and bindings are reproduced in miniature, and even a music portfolio of diminutive form is brought out with a genuine little setting, by Mr. C. Hoby, of words by our contributor Mr. F. E. Weatherly. But of all Messrs. Hildesheimer and Faulkner's designs, the most original are the arrangements, quaint and tasteful, of jewelled mottoes on delicately stamped or embossed white or tinted grounds. With their cards the same publishers send us several Christmas and New Year Gift-books, of which we can only find space to mention in detail one or two, as examples. "A book of Modern Ballads" is a most delightful volume illustrated in colour by the late Alice Havers, and in pen-and-ink by J. P. Sunter. It forms an admirable companion volume to one of an earlier season, but is quite able to stand alone. Mr. J. Clayton Clark has illustrated for another of these books "Some well-known characters" from the works of Dickens, for any of whose admirers this would make a most acceptable souvenir. Two booklets, tastefully bound in white and gold, corded and tasselled, and entitled "Recollections of Venice," and The City of Gondolas," owe their clever illustrations to Mr. C. Robertson, R.W.S. Two others, by different artists, are devoted to "Bettws-y-Coed," and "Stratford-on-Avon." In a clever shoe-shaped booklet Mr. F. E. Weatherly tells once again the story of "The Old Woman who Lived in a Shoe," and in another, Mr. W. S. Gilbert's popular song of the folk "who never would be missed," is accompanied by amusing illustrations by Mr. Henry Reynolds. We have not left ourselves space to speak of the rest of Messrs. Hildesheimer & Faulkner's booklets—and hardly of their new games. To these last, however, we must devote a line or two, if only to say that "Stumbling Blocks," "Flickem," and "Spottit" seem ingenious additions to our store of parlour amusements, well worthy the attention of all heads of families. Messrs. Eyre & Spottiswoode have brought out as a seasonable novelty a series of sets of note-paper and envelopes, prettily decorated with a floral vignette of lilac, carnations, wild roses, wild hyacinths or pansies, and scented by eminent perfumers. No doubt ladies will welcome this innovation.

In Readiness for 1892.

Can any man be said to have his affairs in readiness for the New Year if he has not provided himself in advance with a diary in which to enter engagements already entered into? We think not. But, whatever the nature of his engagements, he will find among the diaries published for the Letts's Diaries Co. by Messrs. Cassell something in which to record them. Be they clerical, there is the "Clerical Diary" with all manner of ecclesiastical information. If they are commercial, then there are office diaries in foolscap, quarto, or octavo size. If social, then there is the "Gentleman's Diary" or the pretty "Nonpareil," the "Card Case" or the tiny "Waistcoat-pocket Diary" in finger-form or with square pages. And, lastly, we must mention the "Ladies' Diary" and those for Housekeepers. In fact there is provision made for every probable need.

Stories for Girls and Boys.

Even these most exacting readers would be hard to please if they could find nothing to their liking among the varied stories issued by Messrs. Blackie and Son in so attractive a form. *Place aux dames!* (even among young folk) so we will say a word or two, first, of the stories for girls. "Gladys Anstruther" is a capital tale by Miss Louisa Thompson of the taming of the unruly spirit whose name gives it a title. It owes something, also, to Mr. Townsend's illustrations. Two other girls' stories from the same publishers are "Three Bright Girls: a story of Chance and Mischance," and "Marian: or the Abbey Grange," both by Miss Annie E. Armstrong, who writes well and evidently with a purpose,

so that one may always use her books for presents or prizes with equal confidence. As much may be said, too, of "Bab: or the Triumph of Unselfishness," by Ismay Thorn, illustrated by Mr. L. Leslie Brooke. All four deserve to be popular with girls. Of five boys' books which Messrs. Blackie send us it is almost sufficient to say of "Hold Fast for England," "Redskin and Cowboy," and "The Dash for Khartoum," that they are all from the facile pen of that true friend of all English-speaking boys, Mr. G. A. Henty. Probably he never displayed his versatility to better advantage than in this trio of volumes, for the first is a tale of the siege of Gibraltar, the second a tale of prairie life, while the third is a stirring story of the Nile campaign. Not one man in a thousand could have adequately treated three such different subjects, but Mr. Henty has succeeded in doing so to an eminent degree. "The Pilots of Pomona" is a seafaring tale of the Orkneys by Mr. Robert Leighton, with a pleasant smack of Scotch talk and character running through it. "Silas Verney," by Mr. Edgar Pickering, is a stirring story of the days of Charles II. We can safely commend all these nine stories to guardians and friends of young folk.

A Diminutive Dictionary.

This is unquestionably an age of condensation, but condensation in literature was surely never carried further than in "Bryce's Thumb English Dictionary" (D. Bryce and Son, Glasgow), which measures only about 2¼ inches, by 1¾, and is scarcely ¾ inch thick. It is said, nevertheless, to contain something like 15,000 references, and to serve as a guide to the spelling of all words in general use over which any doubt as to their orthography might reasonably be expected to hang. So far as we have been able to test it, it certainly answers to the description given of it

Reading for Children.

"The Blue Poetry Book" (Longmans) is a collection of poems, intended for reading by children, and edited by Mr. Andrew Lang, who avowedly bases his selection upon his recollection of the poems which were dear to him in his own childhood. The far-reaching influence of the verse which we read and learn in childhood is a commonplace, and it is therefore all the more important that a selection intended for inexperienced readers should be carefully made. Needless to say, Mr. Lang's collection is admirable in taste; and it is so charming in its appearance that it is sure to be popular among its *clientèle*, and, in our opinion, deservedly so. Another very striking collection of poems—but suitable for older readers as well as for children—is "Story Poems" (Cassell) edited by Miss E. Davenport, who has already achieved some success as an editor of volumes of verse. A very large proportion of the poems included in this neatly-bound book are suitable for recitation, which in itself is a strong recommendation of the work. But, apart from that, it has other claims on our readers, in the catholicity of the editor's choice and the high average of excellence she has maintained. Of the Christmas volume of "Little Folks" (Cassell), we need only say that it is an admirable collection both of stories (long and short) as well as of poems, together with a host of more practical papers—all alike well illustrated, and likely to prove attractive reading for young people.

"The Country of the Vosges."

A few months ago we had the pleasure of noticing in these columns a work by Mr. Henry W. Wolff on "The Watering-Places of the Vosges." We have now to acknowledge the receipt of a more extensive work by the same author on the "Vosges country," dealing with it from its every aspect, but as holiday and health resort particularly. English tourists know too little of the Vosges country, according to Mr. Wolff, although thousands of them skirt it or pass through it every year on their way to and from Switzerland. They might evidently do worse than make it a stopping point on a longer journey, or even an object for a special one, and travellers who think of doing so should certainly see Mr. Wolff's interesting volume, which is published by Messrs Longmans.

Two New Volumes.

Our well-known contributor, the author of "How to be Happy Though Married," has just issued a new "book for everyone" which he calls, "The Business of Life" (T. Fisher Unwin). Like all his works, this new volume is full of genial and chatty papers, that serve equally to amuse and to instruct his readers, while he gives them anecdotes galore. His friends may be forgiven if they wonder whether he is getting near the end of his store of anecdotes, or if it is, as it seems to be, absolutely inexhaustible. With all its lightness and pleasantness, the book is one with a purpose, but the pill is so nicely gilded, that no one could object to take it. From the same publisher we have received a new volume of the "Pseudonym Library" entitled, "Some Emotions and a Moral." We could wish the story had tended towards a different conclusion, but it is so clever in its style and characterization that we can forgive a good deal. The author's pseudonym is "John Oliver Hobbes."

NEW PRIZE COMPETITIONS.

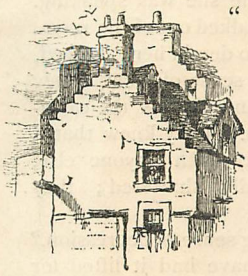
Full particulars of a new and varied Series of Prize Competitions, open to all readers of CASSELL'S MAGAZINE, *will be announced in an early number.*

BETROTHED.

OUT OF THE FASHION.

By L. T. MEADE, Author of "Engaged to be Married," "Scamp and I," etc. etc.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.



"I WILL see you in here," said Margaret, in a cold voice.

She opened the door of a small room on the ground floor, which she used as a sort of private study. It was a dull little room, and was dark now, for the servants had not thought of lighting the gas.

"Had you not better go into father's study, Maggie?" exclaimed Sybil. "This room is not lighted."

"No, I will come here," replied Margaret. "I can soon turn the gas on."

She found a wax taper, held it to one of the jets in the hall, and soon the little room was filled with an ugly, hot light.

Margaret called the plain man in, and the door was closed behind them. The three other girls went up to the drawing-room. Here it was deliciously fresh and cool, for the windows were wide open, the gas burnt low, and the softened light from one or two shaded lamps gave a refined appearance. There were fresh flowers, too, in baskets and vases, and their perfume added to the pleasant, luxurious feeling of the drawing-room.

"How delicious this old room is!" said Betty. "I do think ours is the prettiest drawing-room in London. Isn't the effect out of these windows quite country-like, the moon glinting through the trees in the Square garden, and that little rustle of the wind among the leaves!"

"I vote we have supper in the drawing-room," said Kitty. "I'll ring the bell, and ask Peters to bring up a tray with some fruit and milk."

She did so; the man appeared. She gave her order, and he closed the door respectfully behind him.

"How nice to feel that Peters has been paid all his wages in full," said Betty. "I can order him about now: I couldn't yesterday."

Sybil went out on the balcony. She wanted to look at the moon in the Square Garden; she wanted to be alone. She felt quite sure that something very nice was going to happen—something that would change all the world for her, something that would take all the commonplace out of life, that would put the ideal in.

Sybil was delighted to feel that she was going henceforth to live the ideal life.

"What a change from yesterday!" she murmured; and half unconsciously, half out of sympathy with somebody, she whistled a bar of "Garry Owen."

Just then the hall door was banged rather noisily, and the man in plain clothes walked down the steps, and up the road towards the gates of Rosemary Gardens.

"What an ugly man!" thought Sybil. "What a detestable man. He makes me shiver. I do think the night has turned suddenly cold."

She came in and began to close the windows.

"What *are* you doing?" exclaimed her sisters.

"It has turned cold," said Sybil. "Don't you notice it?"

Kitty laughed.

"Cold! *You* must be cold, child!" she said. "The evening is grilling. Betty and I are simply melted. Ah! here comes supper and something to drink. That's good, and, better still, here's Maggie. Maggie, what did that queer man want?"

"I'll tell you after supper," replied Margaret.

The servant, having placed the tray on a small table, withdrew, and Margaret began to help her sisters to plates of strawberries and cream. She was busy, moving deftly about, and her silence was unnoticed. She did not eat any fruit herself. This was also unnoticed, for happiness makes people queerly selfish now and then, and the other three felt intensely happy while they ate their frugal supper of fruit and milk.

When the meal was over Sybil stood up, stretched herself, yawned, and turned to the others.

"I'm sleepy," she said. "I shall go to bed. Good-night, everybody."

"Come here first, Syb," said Margaret.

There was something a little strained in Margaret's tone, but still none of the others noticed it. Sybil went lightly up to her.

"Did I hear you say, Sybil, that Mark might call here to-morrow?"

Sybil blushed all over her face.

"He said he would come," she answered. Then she added, half pettishly—for she did not half like the consciousness that three pairs of eyes were fixed on her—"Not that I gave him leave—he does it on his own responsibility."

"But you don't forbid him to come?"

"Maggie, of course not."

"You know what he is coming for?"

"How can I possibly tell? I'm dreadfully sleepy; do let me go to bed."

Margaret put her arm round her slim young sister's waist. It seemed to Sybil—but this may have been fancy—that she leant against her as if she suddenly needed support. Her voice, however, had not a trace of apparent emotion in it.

"Don't go to bed yet, dear," she said; "I have something to say."

Sybil dropped into a low chair, crossed her hands on her lap, and glanced with the dawning of fright in her eyes at Kitty and Betty. They were also sitting, but Margaret stood.

"I have something to say," she began. She seemed to find the next words difficult. Her lips were dry; it was a distinct effort to get out any further speech.

"I thought I ought to say it before we went to bed," she began again. "We have had a happy day—it is over, we shan't have any more."

"Margaret!" Three voices uttered the name in different accents of distress.

"We are dishonoured," said Margaret. Then she looked out of the window. Her lips were trembling, her brows slightly knit. She was on the verge of breaking down. She did not. In half a moment she recovered herself.

"Girls," she said, suddenly, "I won't keep the truth from you any longer. I cannot, I dare not. Once I thought I'd let you all have happy dreams to-night, but delay would only be cruel. Oh! my darlings, how can I take the brightness from you? Oh, Syb, my dear, my sweet, how can I take the joy from your life? And yet you ought to know the truth."

Sybil sat in a speechless maze, but Kitty came up to Margaret and took her hands.

"Of course, we ought to know the truth, dear," she said. "Don't tremble, Maggie, whatever is wrong, it is not your fault, and it is far better to know the truth at once."

"The truth is this," said Margaret. "Our father has—has—disgraced us and himself."

Sybil sprang to her feet. Her face turned crimson, words rose to her lips. She came close to Margaret, and was beginning to pour out a torrent of indignant questions when Kitty interrupted her.

"Don't," she said. "You see Maggie has only begun to speak, let her go on. Don't interrupt. Who cares what *you* think at this moment. Now then, Maggie dear, you'll be better after you have told us everything."

"I'll never be better," answered Margaret. "I never can be better nor well again. This is the truth, girls. Our father has absconded. He has taken money, and he has disappeared. That man in plain clothes is a detective. He has asked me questions—many questions. He says he will find our father, and if he finds him he will be——"

"Don't," said Sybil. "Don't say it. I know what you mean, only don't say it."

"I don't want to," said Margaret in a dreary voice. "Perhaps our father will not be found. That is the best thing we can hope for; he is clever, and it is possible he has got away safely."

"I don't understand," said Betty. "It is something very awful, but I don't take it in. What money could father take? I thought the business was his own."

"Yes," replied Margaret, "but there were partners, and—and—other people's money was involved. Anyhow he has gone, and taken a large sum with him."

"Maggie!" suddenly exclaimed Sybil, her voice rising to a piercing cry, "what about the cheques that were sent out this morning? Was he paying all those awful debts with the money he had stolen?"

"I don't know," replied Margaret.

"Are those ten £10-notes stolen money?"

"I don't know," responded Margaret again.

"Maggie, have you nothing to say?"

"What can I have to say? What can anyone have to say who has just been stunned? I am stunned, and I have nothing to say."

Margaret had stood all the time she was speaking. Now she turned suddenly and walked out of the room. The other girls did not attempt to detain her; indeed, her absence gave them a certain sense of relief. They could at least huddle together, and discuss the catastrophe which was crushing them. They knew that it affected Margaret more painfully than anyone else, but all their hopes were equally shattered; they looked at one another in affright.

"To have had a long, lingering sense of depression," said Betty at last, "and then to have had it lifted for twelve short, beautiful hours, and now this crushing blow! Well, I must confess that I cannot comprehend it."

It was midnight when the girls went to bed. They crept upstairs softly, for they did not want the servants to hear them. As they passed Margaret's door, they saw a light streaming out.

"Poor Maggie!" they said one to the other. But they were all too unhappy about themselves just then to volunteer to go in and comfort her.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

THE story of a ruined house and home is generally a nine days' wonder. If the catastrophe is anything on a large scale, the papers take it up, and the world speaks, and wags its censorious old head. There is gossip and talk, commiseration, contempt, scorn, and, in the end, forgetfulness. The world rushes away to revel in a greater scandal; friends return to their own interests; the thing that seemed so mighty to the victims ceases to excite comment. Its brief day is over; it sinks into oblivion.

This was the case with that disgraceful crash which brought to the ground an old and much-respected firm, which ruined some small tradespeople, and some widows, and simple country folk, and which absolutely destroyed the happy home in Rosemary Gardens.

This story is not about the crash, nor its victims, but about four girls, who, in consequence of it, had to turn round and face the world, and prove the metal they were made of.

That happy June day at Richmond was followed by an awful fortnight of suspense. Mr. Ross was not the only partner who had vanished, to all appearance, from the face of the earth. Three men had fled, taking money with them. If they were captured the excitement and disgrace and exposure would be all the greater.

They were not captured. Strange as it may seem in these days of detectives and telegrams and civilised *espionage*, they managed to escape, and at the end of a fortnight the unhappy girls began to entertain a scanty hope that their father might never be found. It was poor consolation at the best, but things were so

low with them just then that they clung even to the uttermost shreds of hope.

One day the post brought a letter for Margaret. She opened it, read its contents, and handed it to her sisters.

"It is from Uncle David," she said. "He writes that he will call here to-day at twelve o'clock. He wishes to see us all together. You had better not go out, Sybil."

"As if I wanted to!" said Sybil.

She spoke in a pettish tone, and would not raise her eyes to meet her sister's.

"Poor child!" thought Margaret. "It falls more heavily on her than on any of us—that is, in some ways, I mean. Why has Mark not been near the house for the last fortnight?"

Punctually at twelve o'clock Mr. David Ross arrived. He was not a London man; he had come from Yorkshire for the express purpose of seeing his nieces. He had neither part nor lot in his brother's affair, and was himself stern and honourable, rather close as concerns money, and rather chary with regard to kind words. He had kept aloof from the girls for a fortnight, but now he thought it well to pay the poor, unhappy girls a visit. They none of them wanted him nor cared for him, but that did not at all matter to David Ross.

"Well, my dears," he said, when he entered the drawing-room, "this is very sad, very terrible, and it cannot be regarded as a Divine dispensation, for it is the result of dishonest wickedness. How are you, Margaret? You look pale!"

"I am quite well, thank you, Uncle David."

Mr. Ross touched his niece's forehead with his lips. The three other girls came up to him, and he performed the same ceremony on the brow of each. Then he sat down in a deep easy chair, and stared all round the room.

"This is a handsome apartment," he said.

The girls did not feel it necessary to make any response to their uncle's remark.

"A very handsome room!" he repeated. "Showily and extravagantly furnished, with a vast lot of unnecessary sunshine. And absolutely flowers, fresh-cut flowers, in the vases!"

"Poor Mrs. Moore brought them yesterday," interrupted Betty. "She was in the country, and she brought a basket back with her. We did *not* buy them. Don't think so."

Sybil kicked out her foot impatiently. Mr. Ross had prominent, light grey eyes—they were cold in expression, and could look almost lustreless when he chose. These lustreless eyes now gazed full at Betty, and then dropped to the level of poor Sybil's little pointed shoe.

"You have grown a good deal, my dear," he said, addressing his youngest niece. "You are quite a big girl for your age. And, by the way, how old are you?"

"I am nineteen," said Sybil, "I have been grown-up for two years or more."

"H'm—ha! That's as other people think. Muriel is seventeen, and *she* calls herself grown-up. Little chit! I consider her an infant."

The fishy eyes grew softer as Muriel's name was mentioned, and Margaret hastened to ask a question or two about her cousin.

"We will speak of Muriel presently, my dears. I will now come briefly to the subject which has brought me to town. Plain and ugly truths must be put in a plain and uncompromising fashion; and, without wishing unnecessarily to hurt your feelings, I must acquaint you with the fact that you are penniless and disgraced young women."

"No, uncle, that is not at all the case," suddenly retorted Sybil.

"What do you mean, miss?"

"We are without money, but we are not disgraced."

"How do you put that, my dear niece?"

Sybil sprang to her feet; her great beautiful eyes flashed sudden sparks of fire.

"Because no one life can disgrace another," she said; "because God has given each of us our own lives. He has given me my life, and Maggie, and Kitty, and Betty theirs; and, whatever our father has done, we are honourable girls, and we mean to go on being honourable girls. We are poor, but we are not disgraced. I deny it for myself, and for Maggie, and Kitty, and Betty. When I do a mean, dirty, shabby thing, my very own self, then I shall be disgraced—not before!"

Sybil rushed to Margaret's side, put her arms round her neck, laid her head on her shoulder, and cried quietly.

"Heroics!" muttered Uncle David—"very young heroics!" Aloud, he said, "My dears, we must to business. I have come up to town at the express request of your Aunt Matilda to see if there is any way in which we can help you."

"Oh, no, thank you, Uncle," said Kitty.

"Why do you say 'No, thank you,' miss? Have you already taken steps to earn your own living? If so, I am pleased to hear it."

"It has been too soon to take decided steps," responded Betty, "but Kitty is right; we wish to be independent."

"Oh, pooh! independent—with nothing a year! Now, my dears, listen to me. This house and furniture will be sold by the creditors. Then you will be homeless as well as penniless. Margaret, who is a well-educated girl, can earn a good income as a governess. You two middle ones, Kitty and Betty I believe you are called, must get situations somehow and somewhere. I will see to that; I have a good deal of influence, and I know a home for ladies where you will be received until such situations are forthcoming. Sybil shall come home with me. Muriel wants a companion, and Sybil shall have the run of the house.

Having delivered himself of this oration in a monotonous tone of voice, Mr. Ross suddenly stopped speaking. He looked round at his four nieces, and after the pause of a full minute said abruptly to Margaret—

"I wish to catch the three o'clock train to the north, and should be much obliged if you would get me a cup of coffee before I start."

"But, uncle——" began Betty.

"Not a word, my dears—not another word. Matters are now satisfactorily arranged—much better and quicker than writing. Margaret, kindly order your servant to bring me some coffee."

Margaret left the room. She was some little time away, and during her absence Mr. Ross pottered about, poking his nose into every corner, and indulging in disparaging remarks generally.

"A most expensive room!" he said: "ridiculous fallals lying about everywhere. No wonder my poor miserable brother disgraced his family! Now look here, Sybil, when you come to Shortlands, you'll have to do with plain furniture—plain dress, plain living, plain food. But mind you, no debts, no shiftless, beggarly ways—all straight as a die, and above board and honourable. Those are the ways at Shortlands, and you had better be prepared for them when you come."

"But I'm not coming, Uncle David."

"Pooh, my dear! I'll send you the price of a second-class ticket, and expect you to arrive this day fortnight. You can't starve in London, child, and as you happen to be blessed or cursed, I don't know which—probably the latter, with good looks, the sooner you become the inmate of a plain Christian home the better. There, my dear, you leave your nonsense and your airs behind you in London, and if you do there is nothing to prevent your having a happy time with my little girl Muriel."

Again at the mention of Muriel's name a softened expression passed over Mr. Ross's face. Margaret returned to the room, and a servant shortly appeared with a tray, which contained coffee and cakes. Mr. Ross drank his coffee with relish, ate some cake sparingly, once again kissed his nieces on their foreheads, told Sybil he would send her a postal order for her fare, and expect her to arrive at Shortlands that day fortnight, and finally left Rosemary Gardens in ample time to catch his return train to the north.

The moment he was gone Sybil rushed out of the room, dashed up to the top of the house, where her own little bedroom was, put on her hat, twisted a black lace scarf round her neck, and, seizing her parasol and gloves, ran downstairs again, and out of the house. It was a fortnight to-day since an arrow had been planted in the poor little girl's heart, and she was not at all accustomed to its presence there, nor did she feel in the least inclined to endure its aching wound.

She left the house now because it seemed too small to hold her and her tortured feelings.

"I suppose it's because I'm younger than the others that I feel almost mad with grief," she said to herself. "But then Maggie and Betty and Kitty have not got Mark. Oh, Mark! what *has* become of you? Has the ground opened and swallowed you up? Why have you not come near me, nor written, nor given me the smallest token of your presence since that awful night a fortnight ago?"

Sybil quickly left Rosemary Gardens. The day was an intensely hot one in July, but the whirl of thoughts in her soul made her indifferent to the fierce heat of the sun. She hurried along the High Street, soon reached Kensington Gardens, and sat down under the shade of a wide-spreading elm-tree. Some children were playing in the distance; some nurses were gossiping together, a little gentle breeze came up at intervals, and touched Sybil's hot cheeks.

She sat and looked straight before her and wondered if she were going through a nightmare, and if presently she would awake with a start, and find that all her tortures were only the result of a bad dream.

She shook herself impatiently once or twice, and, by dint of exercising a tremendous amount of imagination, almost brought herself to believe that she was going back presently to the old bright home in Rosemary Gardens; that, when she felt tired of sitting here, she might cross the High Street, and pass through the sheltering gates, and go up into the pretty drawing-room; that Peters would bring in the tea-equipage, and Margaret would preside, and friends would drop in and chat.

One friend would come among the others—a certain young man, who had a pleasant face and a pleasant way; who had a gay voice for talking, whistling, and singing; who could rattle off an air on the piano, and give utterance to a trivial nothing, which yet, because of the intonation and because of the accompanying glance, meant—oh, pshaw! Sybil sprang to her feet, and shook herself impatiently.

"I won't think in that style any longer," she said half aloud. "The old life is dead. It has been put into a coffin, and buried twenty feet deep under the ground. The Mark I used to know is buried with the life. What *is* the use of thinking about what's gone? I'll go home and talk to Kitty about Shortlands. Hateful Shortlands! I'm not going to live there. Hateful Muriel, with her plain dress and plain ways—*most* hateful Uncle David, but I'm not going to you, and your honourable, honest Shortlands! No, I'd rather beg first."

"My dear, how fearfully hot you will make yourself if you pace up and down so fast on this broiling day," suddenly remarked an old lady, who was sitting near. Sybil stopped, looked at her, half laughed, uttered an almost unintelligible apology and hurried home.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

THERE were two ways of reaching No. 80, Rosemary Gardens: one was the direct path which led straight from the gates to the house. Up this path Mark Danby had come on the morning that Sybil had sat in the balcony and watched him.

Perhaps for this reason she avoided the direct path now, and took the longer way round in preference. By this road she lost sight of No. 80, and had to traverse two sides of the Square before she found it again.

Certainly Rosemary Gardens was a dismal place. Most of the houses were stuccoed, and the stucco had fallen off in large quantities, leaving the most dreary of all forms of house ugliness behind. Fresh paint was almost unknown in the Gardens; tidiness and neatness seemed to have neither part nor lot in these dreary old mansions; nearly half of them were empty, with shutters against the windows, and dismal black boards, signifying that the mansions were at the disposal of the public, leant forlornly against the respective railings.

Sybil walked hurriedly past these empty houses. She had seen them many times before, and did not notice them in the least now. She was hurrying home, although she did not see the least manner of use in hastening her steps.

To get to No. 80 she had to pass a large corner house, which, unlike its neighbours, showed some tokens of neatness and care. It was not a gay house, like No. 80; it was stuccoed in drab, like its neighbours to the right and left, but the stucco was unbroken anywhere; the railings were whole, the windows clean. A wide balcony extended beyond the drawing-rooms at this house. It was a larger balcony than that which had been made so picturesque at No. 80. But it contained no striped awning, no flowers, no graceful bamboo chairs and lounges. There was a chair in it, however, an old-fashioned mahogany chair, with arms, and in the chair now, sat an old lady.

Her name was Jessica Power. She was unmarried, and, for some reason known only to herself, she liked all her friends to call her Jessica. Even young men, who did not know her particularly well, addressed Miss Power as "Jessica." They did so by her express invitation, accepting the fact that she was a little odd, but liking her none the worse for that.

As Sybil now passed under the balcony of the corner house, Miss Power popped her head over the railing and spoke to her.

"Is that you, Sybil Ross? Come up, I want to speak to you."

"Very well, Jessica," replied Sybil.

She ran up the steps and rang the bell. In a moment or two a very old servant answered her summons. She wore on her head a high mob cap, with a broad band of black ribbon tied comfortably round the cap, and under her chin. She had a dress made of a gaily-flowered old-fashioned chintz, with sleeves which used to be called "leg-of-mutton," and a black apron of alpaca, with deep pockets.

"Your mistress has asked me to run up to the drawing-room to speak to her, Susannah," announced Sybil, when the servant opened the door.

The old body dropped a respectful curtsy, pointed to the staircase, mumbled something about bringing up tea in a few minutes, and disappeared.

Sybil ran upstairs and entered the drawing-room. Miss Power came forward to meet her. She was dressed in very rich black silk, with a cap of choice lace on her head. Her hair was gray, her eyes dark, her smile pleasant.

"You have not been near me for a fortnight, Sybil!" she said.

"Oh, Jessica! you know why I have not come to see you," replied Sybil, her lips beginning to tremble.

Miss Power took one of Sybil's hands in her own.

"Come and sit by me in the balcony, my love," she said. "Here, this is your favourite little chair. Now, Sybil, I saw you passing, and an impulse made me call

"THE OLD BODY DROPPED A RESPECTFUL CURTSY."

out to you. I know *everything:* there has not been one scrap of the gossip which has not reached me; Susannah took care of that. Susannah doesn't talk much, but she goes out in the evening, and she listens to the gossip of the neighbours, and what she hears she gathers up. Susannah poured her gatherings into my ears for the last fortnight, Sybil."

"Yes, Jessica."

"So, my love, I know all about everything—I probably know three times or four times as much as really happened. But I like to assure you on this point, so that you need not have to tell me the tale over again. Now I asked you to come up to put a plump question to you."

"Very well, Jessica."

"What a dead-and-alive 'very well'! Why, a fortnight ago, the child could scarcely contain her own high spirits, and now—I don't believe Susannah has exaggerated her report so much."

"She could not have exaggerated," said Sybil in a low voice. "Nothing, nothing, could be worse than what has happened."

"Well, my love, well—we won't go into that now. Here's my plain question, Sybil: Do you and your sisters mean to take a good, hard grip of the situation, or will you let matters slide?"

Sybil opened her eyes very wide. For a moment, a look of resolution and courage filled them, then they drooped, tears gathered under the full lids, and a broken, crushed kind of voice issued from the soft, rosy lips.

"I feel just now," said Sybil, "that I must let matters slide. There is no grip in me anywhere."

"That is bad, my love, and there must be a reason for it, over and above the mere fact of your money being gone. The loss of money never crushed Nineteen yet, never—impossible. Nineteen laughs at money, and doesn't believe in it. Oh, my dear child, the charm and the power and the greatness of Nineteen are more than a match for all the money in the world. You must have another trouble, Sybil."

"Don't question me, Jessica!"

"But I must. It is absolutely necessary that I should get to the bottom of everything."

"Oh! I can't be probed. Do turn your eyes away. I really cannot bear to be cross-examined just now."

"Well, well, poor little girl, I would not be unkind for the world. Here comes Susannah with the tea. You shall pour me out a cup of tea, Sybil. Susannah, we'll have the little table out here on the balcony. Thank you—I see you have remembered all my wants. These strawberries look tempting, the cream is fresh, and here are Miss Sybil's own favourite tea-cakes! Now, Sybil help me first, and then yourself. That will do, Susannah, you can leave us now, and be sure you shut the door after you."

Susannah dropped another of her old-world curtsies, looked at her mistress, then rolled her eyes with an interrogative glance at Sybil, made no comment with her lips, but said unutterable things by means of her expressive face, and, tripping neatly out of the balcony, went across the drawing-room and disappeared.

"Susannah is a dear old soul!" remarked Miss Power.

"I suppose she is," answered Sybil, "but isn't she a remarkably silent old soul as well? I have hardly ever heard her speak."

"My love, she never does, except rather late in the evening. Then, as a rule, she unburdens herself to me. Her words come with a rush, and I expect the effort exhausts her, for I can scarcely get her to articulate until the same hour arrives the following night. But now to return to you and your sisters. How are the other three girls, by the way?"

"I suppose they are quite well."

"Is Margaret quite well? If there is one of you about whom I have felt a degree of anxiety that one is Margaret."

"Thank you, Jessica, Margaret is not ill."

"Well, that is good news. I knew she was a brave girl. In fact, you all are. You'll all take a firm grip presently, even you, my poor little Nineteen-year-old."

"Jessica," said Sybil, suddenly, "do you know that Uncle David Ross came to see us to-day? He has offered me a home at Shortlands."

"Well, my love?"

"I am to go and live there, Jessica, to be a companion to Muriel Ross. I am to help to amuse her, and for that purpose he says I shall have the run of the house."

"Yes, dear."

"You wouldn't say 'Yes, dear,' in that calm voice, Jessica, if you had listened to Uncle David this morning. He says the house is a plain house, the people plain, the ways plain. By 'plain' read 'ugly,' —the people are ugly, and their ways are mean."

"Oh, tut, child! you have no right to speak in that fashion."

Miss Power got up, shook some crumbs out of her black silk dress, and, leaning over the balcony, looked down the Gardens as far as she could see.

"There is nobody coming," she said, after a pause.

"No," returned Sybil, with a sigh. "Nobody ever does come, just now."

Miss Power gave the girl a quick look.

"Go home, my love," she said, after a pause. "Come back to see me to-night, or to-morrow, or any time when you feel stronger, and in the meantime take a message from me to the sister who has the greatest taste for housekeeping, who has the largest supply of spirit to carry her through this adversity, and who, in short, is most likely to take a grip of the situation. Which of your sisters will you send to see me, Sybil?"

Sybil absolutely laughed, and the dawning of interest began to appear in her eyes.

"Jessica," she said, "you are like no one else. You never do things without meaning. What can be your meaning now?"

"You'll know fast enough, child, if I can see sufficient grip in any of the family. It all depends on that. Now, who will you send?"

"Margaret always used to be our housekeeper, and she is brave—oh, very brave. But I think, Jessica,

I do think somewhere below the surface Maggie carries about with her a broken heart. You know what she thought of our—our father."

"I know, child. I know perfectly. Poor Maggie! I always knew it would come hardest on her."

"But she is a very good housekeeper, Jessica. Shall I send her to you?"

"Perhaps not, my dear. She will find her niche, no doubt, but I must have spirit as well as talent—I must have cheerfulness, dash, daring."

"Good gracious, Jessica! what can you mean?"

"I thought I'd excite your curiosity, Sybil. I see, my love, that you'll recover by and by. You feel low enough to-day, but in the end you won't let matters slide. Please now tell me about your middle sisters. What about Kitty and Betty? Describe their characters. Speak of them as if you were writing a description to go into a novel."

Sybil laughed again.

"Kitty is very fearless," she began.

"Fearless—that is good. What else is Kitty?"

"She has such high spirits that, even during the last fortnight she has been heard to laugh; she is awfully clever, and she can say sharp, witty things; she is quick, too, and practical."

"Capital girl Kitty must be," rejoined Jessica. "Now what about Betty?"

"Betty is nearly as good a housekeeper as Maggie. She is a better cook than Kitty, and she is clever with her needle. In other ways she is Kitty's shadow; they are scarcely ever apart, and I am almost sure they think the same thoughts."

"Excellent—most excellent. Send them both to see me to-morrow morning. I breakfast at eight. Let them be here sharp at nine. Now, one question more. Who are your solicitors?"

"Our what?"

"My dear, there must be some business people acting for you, or if not for you, at any rate for your father's creditors. If you do not know the name, find it out, and send me word at once."

"I think I do know, for Margaret has mentioned them several times. Messrs. Rogers and Turner, of Lincoln's Inn Fields."

"Thank you, my dear child. Now you can run home. Be sure you give my message to Kitty and Betty."

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

SYBIL ran downstairs, and, without waiting for Susannah's aid, let herself out into the street. There was animation once more in her face and bearing. She looked younger than when she had entered the house. She did not know why she felt hopeful, but hope unquestionably once more shone in her eyes. She was conscious of a distinct sense of curiosity, and prepared to rush eagerly home, and give an animated account of her interview with Jessica Power.

She raced down the massive flight of stone steps which led from the deep portico to the street. Then she stood still. The colour rushed like a flood all over her face. The next moment it receded, leaving it stricken, and pale, and wretched. Mark Danby was walking fast to meet her; he came up, and, before she could prevent him, took one of her hands in both of his.

"I have been at No. 80," he said; "you were not there. Kitty was in, and she gave me some tea. I thought perhaps you were with Jessica; I meant to call on the chance."

Mark spoke in a hurry. All the time he was speaking his eyes were fixed on Sybil's face. They were dark eyes, bold and eager in expression. Sybil would have given worlds to turn from their gaze at that instant. The sudden meeting agitated her. She was dreadfully afraid of tears coming. She knew she ought to be cold, and proud, and distant. She hated the flutter of joy which filled her heart; and she was painfully conscious that her face was a transparent one, and that Mark was looking through it into her soul.

"Haven't you a word to say to me, Sybil?"

"Oh! of course, Mark, how do you do? Please let go my hand."

Danby unclasped his own strong hands slowly.

"You don't look well," he said in a grave voice. "You look much worse than Kitty."

"Oh! please don't talk about my looks."

"Well, I have a good many other things to talk about. Where can we go to have a quiet time?"

"Nowhere."

"Sybil, you don't mean that?"

Danby turned round and looked once more at the young girl. She tried to avoid returning his glance. Then her shy eyes were raised to his. He smiled at her; and, in spite of herself, Sybil returned the smile.

"My little darling!" he said, in a fervent, passionate voice.

He drew Sybil's hand through his arm. Nobody saw them in the old, deserted gardens.

"Let us come into the Square garden; it will be absolutely empty," said Danby.

They went there without another word. The Square garden had one or two broken-down rural seats. It was a place not kept in any kind of order, and, but for its tennis-court, would have been a howling wilderness long ago. When Danby and Sybil entered the garden the tennis-court was empty. They found a rustic seat, which was sufficiently whole to bear their weight, and sat down side by side. Danby sat close to Sybil. She did not move away; she remained absolutely motionless, her hands crossed idly on her light summer dress, her eyes gazing straight before her. Once again her eyes had grown dark and deep, and looked like spring violets in the midst of her fair face.

Mark Danby had almost killed her with his neglect, but this was absolutely forgotten now; he had come back again—he would give a good reason for the absence which had almost broken her heart.

"Sybil, you know what I was coming for that day?" he began, suddenly. "Speak to me, look at me, say you know."

"But—but you didn't come, Mark."

"I will explain that later. Answer my question now. Say you know what I was coming about."

"I—I—am not quite sure."

"Sybil, are you speaking the truth? Look at me, look me full in the face, and say those words again. Say again that you are not quite sure."

Sybil would have given the world to make a saucy rejoinder. She could not; she felt exactly as if she were under a spell; her lips quivered; she turned her head, and looked at Mark.

"I did know," she said, almost in a whisper.

"Ah, my little darling! I won't torture you any longer. I was coming to ask you to be my wife: I ask you now. Come into my arms, and say 'Yes' there."

Danby came closer, folded his arms round the girl, who half shrank from, half leant against him, and printed a kiss on her lips.

"You will be my wife?" said he.

"Oh, Mark, I love you!" said Sybil.

And now all the tears of a fortnight past appeared to have broken their barriers. She struggled in vain to restrain them; they would have their way, and came, accompanied by a few deep-drawn, painful sobs.

Mark Danby was like many other men; he hated to see a woman cry. He was fond of Sybil, but he wished she would not weep so violently while she leant against him.

"You have not answered my question," he said presently. "I have asked you to be my wife. I want to hear 'Yes' from those lips, and, Sybil, I want those pretty eyes of yours to look at me through smiles, not tears."

Sybil made a tremendous effort. Her choking painful sobs grew less; they ceased. She even gave Mark the smile he wished for.

"You will be my wife, darling?" said the young man, stooping and kissing her once again. At the second kiss she started back, and almost pushed him from her.

"You mustn't kiss me any more," she said. "I am not yours."

"Not mine! I like that, and just after telling me that you loved me—and, Sybil, you look as if you loved me."

"THEY FOUND A RUSTIC SEAT" (*p.* 71).

"Yes, Mark, I do love you."

"Then why do you say you are not mine?" Danby suddenly pulled out his watch. "I say! I had no idea it was so late. I have to be at Waterloo to catch a train for the country before seven o'clock. Now, Sybil, you know you love me, and of course you'll be my wife. We must be married soon—very soon—almost at once. I'll come to see you again early next week, only let me hear 'Yes' from the lips I love best before I go."

"Dear, dear, Mark, I long to say 'Yes,' but I dare not, I must not. My people are disgraced, and I won't bring disgrace upon you. I said to Uncle David Ross to-day that my father's dishonour could not spoil my life, but, oh, it does—it does—cruelly!"

"Syb, you are a perfect little goose. What *do* I care about your father, or any nonsense of that sort? We'll be married, my dear, and live happy ever after. To hear you talk, anyone would suppose you had been having a conversation with my worldly old mother."

"Ah," said Sybil, with a start, "I knew Lady Jane Danby would not approve of me."

"Let her not approve! *I* do, and I suppose I am the person to be principally considered. Now, Sybil, I really must fly; give me another kiss, and say 'Yes.'"

Sybil struggled against the kiss, not outwardly, but in that mental part of her being which told her to be stiff and cold and to flee from temptation. But her struggle was feeble and ineffectual. The kiss was given and returned, and something was murmured into Mark's ears which appeared to satisfy him. He crushed the girl's hands between his own so frantically that she almost cried with pain, and, promising to write and to return without fail the following week, he left her.

Sybil came out of the Square garden presently, with a confused, delirious sense of bliss in her heart, and an intangible, and yet very real pricking of her conscience.

She was engaged to Mark Danby; her wish was granted; her crowning desire given to her. She loved him with the fervour of a very passionate wilful nineteen-year-old girl. He was full of faults, and she thought him a god.

Poor conscience! It had not much chance of being heard just then. The more Sybil thought of what had happened the greater rose her ecstasy. When she entered No. 80, it seemed once more to herself that she was treading on air.

Since the crash of a fortnight ago the girls had given up late dinner; Peters, with several other servants, had disappeared from the establishment. The cooking at No. 80 was scanty just now, and the attendance of the most meagre. Except five o'clock tea, a meal which no woman under any circumstances will do without, the Rosses took food anyhow, anywhere, and anywhen. They were now in the drawing-room, and might, or might not, take supper before they retired for the night.

Sybil was rushing past the closed doors of the drawing-room to seek the shelter of her own bedroom, when suddenly a pair of hands were placed before her eyes from behind, and Kitty's high, cheerful, but somewhat teasing, voice was heard.

"Not a bit of it, Syb! You are not going to banish yourself in this style. Come right into the drawing-room, and tell us what you have been doing all these long hours when you have so mysteriously absented yourself. If you are a good girl, and give a fair, unvarnished account of your doings, I'll tell you who I had the pleasure of entertaining in your absence."

"Kitty, do let me go upstairs, I'm so tired," pleaded Sybil.

"Tired! I never saw you look better in my life."

"But I am tired, really. I look well because my cheeks are flushed."

"Well, I suppose if you must banish yourself, you must. Poor little Syb! Margaret is in the drawing-room, and so is Betty, and we were having a rather interesting discussion with regard to ways and means."

"Oh, I don't want to hear it—I *can't* listen."

"As you please, my love. It concerns you as well as the rest of us. We were on the subject of summer dress, when I heard your fairy footfall, and rushed out to waylay you."

"You will excuse my coming in, Kitty, and oh! I had a message for you. You and Betty are to go and see Jessica in the morning."

"Jessica? I don't know that we'll have time."

"You *must* go; she has sent a most particular message. You have to be there at nine o'clock. I really do think it's something important."

"Well, I'll tell Betty. Why doesn't Jessica send for Margaret if she has important things to talk over? Sybil, you have not guessed whom I entertained this afternoon."

"I know," answered Sybil. "You gave Mark Danby his tea."

"Then you met him?"

"Yes."

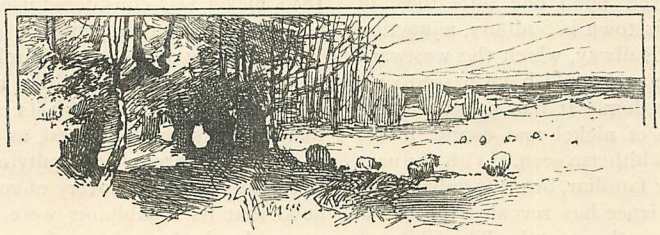
"Look at me, Sybil. Hold up your head. Look me full in the face."

"Yes, Kitty."

"Sybil!"

"Yes, Kitty: I'm not ashamed—I am engaged to Mark. I am going to marry him."

END OF CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.



THE YEAR'S JEWELS.

BY M. C. GILLINGTON.

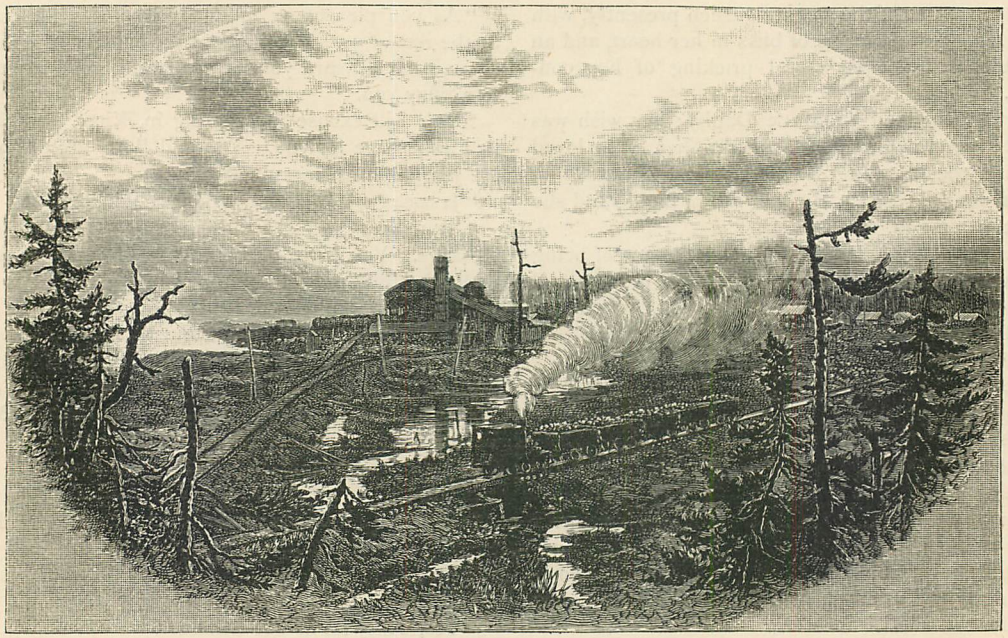
GARNET: JANUARY.

Constancy and fidelity.

A ROSY stone, a rosy sky,
A hand and a world of snow—
Why do they flicker before mine eye,
And harry and haunt me so?
What should a rosy sky presage
But a fair new year to be?
"Constant love" was the garnet's pledge,
As she stood in the path by the frosty hedge,
And thawed the heart in me.

A rosy stone, a rosy lip—
If they shine so warm to-night,
While the keen wind strikes like a stinging whip
Over the cold grey light,
How might they burn at the mid o' the year
When the tide of the May runs high?
But the fields are dumb and the fells are drear,
And the snow lies white on her pathway here,
Under a rosy sky.

TREASURE-TROVE IN CENTRAL CANADA.



BLIZZARD SMELTER MINE, SUDBURY.

ONLY recently the eyes, not only of the mining, but also of the commercial world have been fixed upon one little town in Canada. This town is Sudbury, a junction on the Canadian Pacific Railway, which the westward traveller but a short time ago would have passed with nothing but a sigh of boredom. It has now been discovered to be the centre of nickel and copper mines larger than the world has hitherto seen. With the uses of copper we are already familiar, but it is only within the last few years that science has revealed the possibilities that lie before the other metal. The Chinese, indeed, claim to have known the value of nickel centuries ago, but Europeans only knew of its existence in the eighteenth century. Up to as recent a date as 1889, nickel was considered useful, and no more—it is now found to be indispensable.

The history of the small hamlet of Sudbury—now a second El Dorado—reads like a romance. It started as a lumber town, although its prospects in that direction always seemed limited, as well through scarcity of timber as through difficulty of transport. Indeed, it was only by the discovery of copper in the neighbourhood that its inhabitants were rescued from distress caused by the large forest fires. Mines were opened, and large quantities of ore exported in utter ignorance

BLIZZARD MINE, SUDBURY:
SURFACE NICKEL MINING.

of the fact that the copper ore contained a considerable percentage of nickel. It must always remain a mystery as to who first made this discovery. It is said that it was due to the action of some conscientious manager in a New York smelting company, who remitted the money for the nickel as well as the copper to the mine owners. At any rate, the metal was now known to exist, but it was uncertain in what quantities. Important experiments having revealed the value of nickel to the American Government, they sent surveyors to the spot. These more than confirmed the reports of the local mineral commission; there was visible above ground 650 millions of tons of ore. The whole area of land rich with metal covered 15,000 square miles; enough nickel was already discovered to supply the world for fifty years!

For a short time it seemed as if there would be a "boom" at Sudbury rivalling, if not surpassing, that of the days of the gold fever in California or silver in Nevada. Rich and poor flocked to the spot: the speculator, with his thousands, was there, side by side with the penniless man of fashion. There, too, collected the band of ne'er-do-weels with whom all mining districts abound, who hoped that the scanty knowledge of mines and minerals picked up in British Columbia or North Michigan would at last bring them good fortune. Land lots were bought and sold with intense rapidity. A man who buys a lot one day for £50 is offered £5,000 for it the next, when it is found that he has chanced upon one of the richest veins of ore. He refuses the offer, and in two months gets £20,000 instead. Like the soldiers in Napoleon's army—each one of whom carried the field-marshal's *bâton* in his knapsack—each man you meet at Sudbury sees before him the vision of untold wealth. Those who have read Mark Twain's account of "Flush Times in Virginia City" can easily pourtray the hubbub in this once stagnant village.

Meanwhile, the army of prospectors, whose trade it is to find and value the veins of ore, wander doggedly over the country. Never an inviting district, it now looks particularly cheerless to the passer-by, with its coating of snow and charred stumps of pines as far as the eye can reach. Nature, in revenge for the discovery of her wealth, seems to have haughtily veiled the beauty of her face. The prospector is generally a man of strong constitution. For weeks he wanders alone, feeding on food coarser than that of a labourer, yet seeking vast treasures. Every step he plants he fancies may be on a mine; a bush, a branch, may be the only thing between him and the realisation of his wildest dreams. Socially, he is most entertaining; he

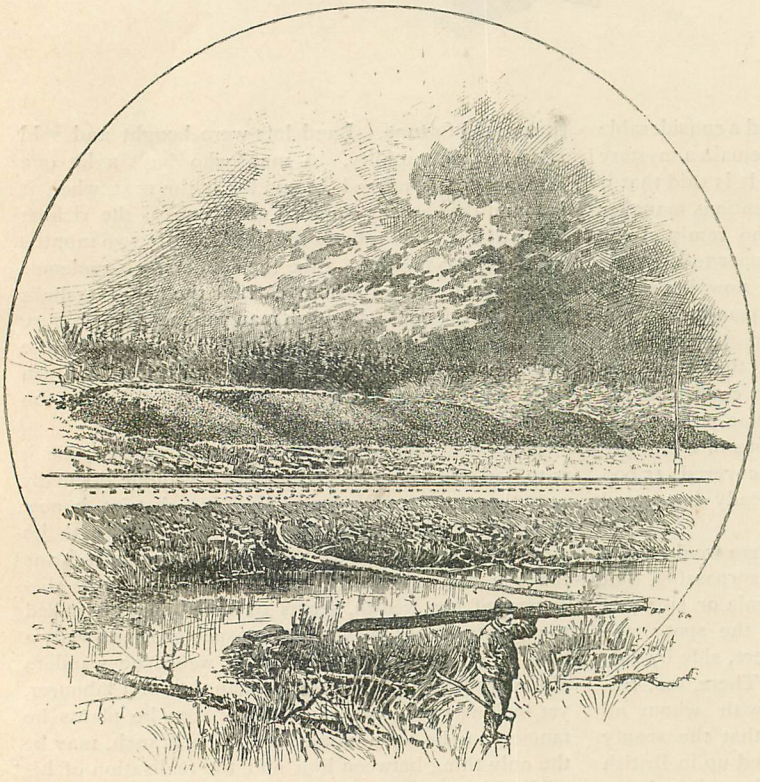
knows a little of everything, and is veritably "not one, but all mankind's epitome." He talks freely, and no one need be afraid of trying to extract information from him, for he will say what suits him, and no more.

But apart from the prospector, who knows his business more or less, every man you meet at Sudbury has a lump of rock in his pocket. All have wonderful reliance on their own luck, and the most inexperienced will tell you, in a hushed whisper, how the great Comstock silver lode was walked over a thousand times unseen by the cleverest experts in the land.

The uses to which this newly-found wealth of ore is to be applied may be grouped under two heads. In the first place, it has been proved by a series of experiments that nickel steel, a material made of four parts of nickel to ninety-six of steel, is superior to the plain steel used at present.

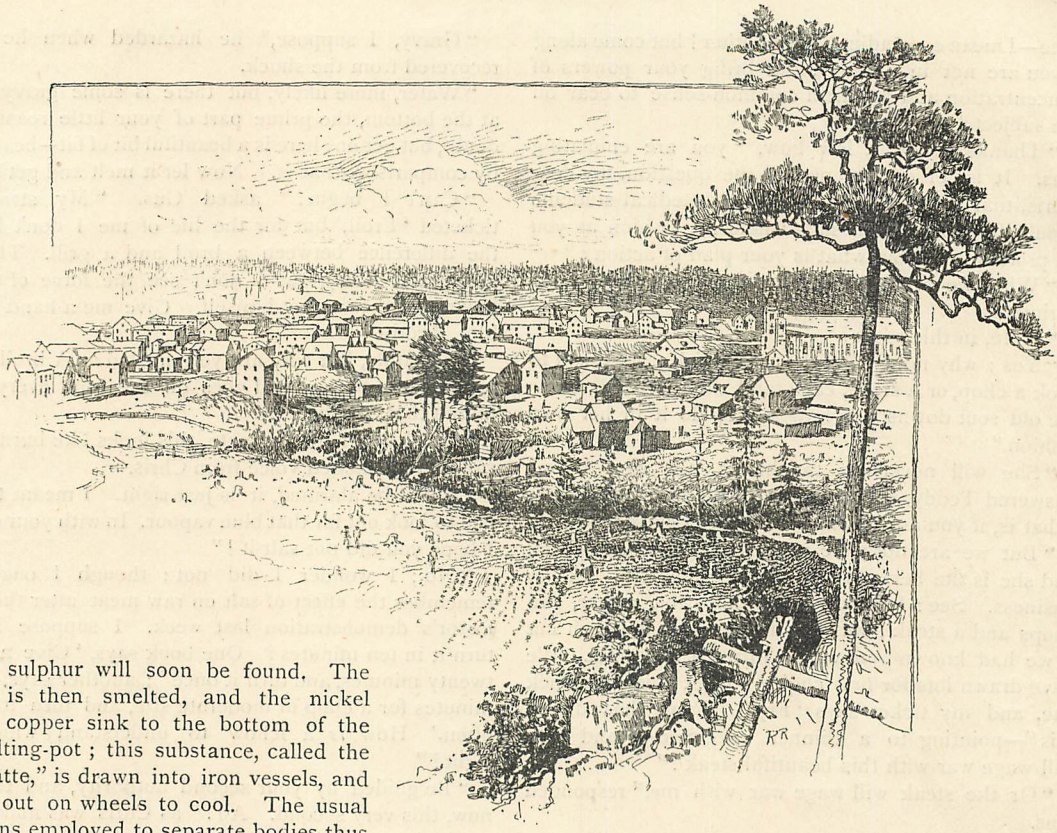
Breaking and hoisting tests have been applied to the new combination, and it is found that the strength of the metal is largely increased: two pounds weight of nickel steel will effect the purposes of four pounds of the old substance. Again, the non-corrodibility of the material is established. It is easy to see that with such qualities as these the new metal will be adopted for such things as locomotives, bridges, and rails, while it will change the character of machinery and revolutionise the present armament system. As to the part it will play in the future warfare of the world, experiments lately conducted by the American Government have given ample testimony. If introduced into the construction of heavy guns, it will reduce the chances of bursting to a minimum; if used in heavy armour-plating, it will be almost impenetrable. For further proof of its value, we have only to point to the fact that England, France, and Germany have offered ten years' contracts to one company working the mines for all the material they can supply. The offer has been refused, and for this reason: in addition to its nickel, there have been discovered in this neighbourhood enormous iron-beds, and it is from a combination of these two that the material of the future is formed. Other lands have nickel, other lands have iron: none, it may be said, have both in such profusion. It is the aim of those owning the mines to complete the whole process of manufacture on the spot, instead of exporting the raw material to be reduced elsewhere. The American Government have already shown that they are anxious to perform the separation of the metal from its accompanying substances in their own country and in their own manufactures. Heavy duty is imposed on pure nickel, but none whatever on the "matte"—the name given to the combination of nickel and copper; therefore, until this restriction is removed, Canada will have to rely on her English and European markets if she wishes to separate the "matte" herself.

It is expected that in a short time millions of money will be added to that already invested in this country, and that nickel will thus draw capital across the water to work the hitherto untouched iron mines.



ORE BEDS (DOMINION MINERAL CO.'S MINE, SUDBURY).

The mines in the neighbourhood of Sudbury are, indeed, rapidly absorbing the nickel supply of the world, to the detriment of the New Caledonia mines, which up till recent years monopolised the market. Nor could it be otherwise; for New Caledonia, in addition to its distance, is a French colony, tied down by the strictest protective regulations. Sudbury wants but one thing to place it first and foremost in the market, and that is an improved method for the separation of the copper from the nickel as it is extracted from the mines. To the outward eye, copper is the principal factor of any piece of rock picked up by a visitor to this district, but there is a large percentage of nickel always there, as well as a quantity of sulphur. The ore is first crushed and then laid on stacks of wood, where it is roasted for months, during which dense columns of sulphur-smoke pass off wasted into the air. Doubtless, a method for preserving



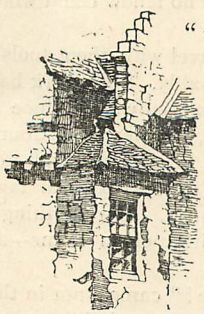
THE TOWN OF SUDBURY, 1890.

this sulphur will soon be found. The ore is then smelted, and the nickel and copper sink to the bottom of the smelting-pot; this substance, called the "matte," is drawn into iron vessels, and run out on wheels to cool. The usual means employed to separate bodies thus blended here fail, for nickel and copper are of the same specific gravity. This difficulty is, however, said to be almost overcome.

At the present moment, while the mines are in their infancy and the demand for nickel has to be met, copper is at a discount, and, strange as it may seem, the ore is valued by the absence of copper. Thus 15 per cent. of nickel and 10 per cent. of copper is of greater value than 15 per cent. of nickel and 20 per cent. of copper. It is obvious that it cannot be long before science has reversed this state of things.

The second great use to which the new metal is to be put in the future is in a combination of nickel and copper, which will supplant German silver and Britannia metal; hence it will be used in the making of household utensils and fancy articles of every description. It is to these two uses that the nickel and copper just found are to be applied; and it is to be hoped, for the sake of the country that owns them, that science and legislation will join in giving her the full benefits of her wealth.

A BACHELORS' BROIL.



"WHAT *is* the row, may I ask?"

"Forcible, but *as* usual, not polite Teddy! Yes, you may ask; furthermore, you shall have an answer, and if you can throw oil on the troubled waters——"

A loud laugh followed, and then the quietest member of the group attempted an explanation, by nipping in the bud the speech of his companion, Gus Morrison, who was noted for, and unmercifully chaffed on account of, his powers of rhetoric.

"*I'll* tell you, Teddy; the fact is we are all sick of chops—at least of Mrs. Grim's way of serving them; and in counsel assembled we are, or were, endeavouring to solve a problem, namely——"

"Whether a chop, or steak," broke in Gus, "must of necessity, be black, be greasy, be smoked, or be tough!"

"Thanks, that will do; what a string of horrors! Judging from your surroundings, you have been reading up your subject."

"Rather! and, as Jimmy here always declares when exams. are at hand, the more we read the more we are mystified. Oh!" with a groan, "how these authors

hate—I mean contradict—one another! but come along if you are not in a hurry, and bring your powers of concentration and practical common-sense to bear on the subject."

"Thanks," with a low bow, "you are emulating Gus. It is, of course, out of the question, my dear Chris, that a trio of such promising medical students should be poisoned in such wholesale fashion as you all profess to be, but what is your plan of action?"

"Why, we are going to make some practical experiments."

"Here, in this room?"

"Yes; why not? But let me finish; we mean to cook a chop, or a steak, each, and then we will show the old soul downstairs how *not* to do it in her own fashion."

"She will never be taught at her age, boys," answered Teddy, with a mournful shake of the head; "that is, if you are 'pranky' here as in class."

"But we are not; we *never* lark with Mrs. Grim, and she is the best old creature in the world. But to business. See: here are three chops, or, rather, two chops and a steak; we would have had a fourth cut if we had known *you* would turn up, old man. We have drawn lots for first choice; I get this nice thick one, and my ticket says 'Fry.' Jimmy has drawn this"—pointing to a thinner specimen—"and Gus will wage war with this beautiful steak!"

"Or the steak will wage war with me," responded Gus.

Teddy critically examined the meat, remarking that it wasn't fair to start with, for anybody could see with half an eye that the chops were from very unequal specimens, while it would be only common justice for Chris to exchange with Jimmy, whose scrappy morsel was labelled "Grill."

"All right; but why? But you can tell me after. Here goes," dropping his chop into a frying-pan with a morsel of burnt-looking fat. He was about to place the pan over the fire, when it was rescued by Teddy, who exclaimed—

"I thought as much! Cold pan, cold fat, cold chop! Fire's all right, but that's the only thing that is!"

"Why, would you have me make the chop hot? What's wrong in having a cold chop!"

"Nothing; I put it wrongly; your mistake is in the pan and the fat; and what a pan!"—holding it up to the light—"why, it looks as if it had served for a salamander! Never mind; we will coax the fat to the side where it is thickest. May I wipe it out?" passing his finger round, "for it looks as if it wants it," following up his speech by a vigorous rubbing with a coarse cloth, without waiting for permission. "Here," handing the pan to Chris, "I know enough of the theory of cooking to tell me *that* was necessary; now, if I may make a suggestion, you will replace that bit of fat with a piece six times the size, the whitest you can find in this pot," passing over a small jam jar which stood on the table.

Chris plunged his knife into the contents, which shot up in a cake, and caused him to blink, as something of a liquid nature splashed him in the face.

"Gravy, I suppose," he hazarded when he had recovered from the shock.

"Water, more likely, but there is some gravy here at the bottom, the prime part of your little roasts no doubt, but get on; here is a beautiful bit of fat—beautiful by comparison, that is. Now let it melt and get hot."

"Can't I begin?" asked Gus. "My steak is ticketed 'Broil,' but for the life of me I don't know the difference between a broil and a grill. There's no special hurry, but I don't see the force of Chris having all the fire to himself. Give me a hand or a hint, Teddy."

"Certainly, but why are you puzzled? A broil goes in front of a fire—a grill goes on the top; everybody knows that, surely."

"Oh, I say, here a minute, this looks like burning!" came in an excited voice from Chris.

"Don't be alarmed, it is just right. I meant to tell you to look out for that blue vapour. In with your chop; I hope you did not salt it!"

"No; I wonder I did not; though I ought to remember the effect of salt on raw meat after the professor's demonstration last week. I suppose I can turn it in ten minutes? One book says, 'Give a chop twenty minutes, and turn it once'; another says, 'Ten minutes for a chop of moderate size, and turn it very often.' How *is* a fellow to understand which is right?"

"Be guided by your second authority, and turn it now, this very second. Ah!" as Chris was making a prod with a fork in the lean part, "would you let out what drop of gravy there is?" seizing the chop on the point of a penholder, for want of a better tool, and quickly turning it over.

"What a chap you are, always doing other people's work; but I expect you know all about it, and can tell me from start to finish."

"Well, I didn't camp out for a month for nothing. *I* should turn that every minute for eight minutes—quite enough for the specimen," noting Chris's sceptical look.

"And if solemnity is a factor, you'll do!" said Gus the irrepressible.

Next came the last speaker's "broil"—but where was the utensil? Nothing in the shape of a broiler was forthcoming, whereupon the toasting fork was declared to be the only thing by Jimmy, but Gus stuck out for some other medium, as "no fellow could work without tools."

"But only bad workmen quarrel with their tools; stick to your colours," urged Teddy. "The fork has four prongs, and, if you are careful you will produce a dish very little inferior to a grill, but were you Count Rumford, Soyer, and Francatelli in one, it would not be quite the same; it couldn't; it's a chemical law, and there's no getting away from it. But anything's better than *fried* meat. Bah! It's poison to me—as a rule, of course, I mean."

"Why didn't you say so before?" came—not in the pleasantest voice—from Chris, who was holding aloft his chop, while he rated Gus for poking the fire without giving him warning to move his pan.

"A thousand pardons, but it isn't spoiled, or it couldn't look like that; it's as brown as a berry, and smells delicious."

Then down to the glowing embers went a low stool, and on the stool a plate, followed by Gus in a capacious arm-chair, so near to the fire that he seemed in danger of broiling himself.

"As I was saying," resumed Teddy, "there are degrees of excellence in the products of the frying-pan, and yours is ample proof that they need not be greasy, sodden, and notoriously indigestible! But there's nothing like acquainting yourself with as many methods as you can; you never know what you will want, and there may come a time in our lives when a snack from a frying-pan would be worth its weight in gold. But gravy or no gravy is at present the question. Surely some benefit is derivable, or ought to be, from the use of this jellied gravy."

"Oh dear!" cried Chris, "I have not warmed my dish: it ought to be warm."

"Warm! It ought to be piping hot—burn your fingers, in fact. Bad luck to you! you've taken fifty per cent. off the value of your chop; but keep it hot, do. Pop it on the hob, there. Now for a steady hand, don't give the dripping-pot the benefit of any of those little specks of brown at the bottom of your pan; they are the essence of your meat, you know."

And not a spot did Chris lose, as he poured off the fat with the greatest care.

Then into the pan went a generous spoonful of the afore-mentioned gravy, and back over the fire went the pan, Chris scraping all the time with an old iron spoon. and in adding the water he was cautioned not to use too much of "that precious liquid, and to mind the whole boiled up before he poured it round his chop." But the latter caution was not needed, for he boiled so vigorously, and tasted so often, between pinches of salt and drops of sauce, until the desired flavour should be reached, that there seemed danger of there being no gravy left.

At length all seemed right but the colour of the gravy; that satisfied no one, the verdict being given in a word—"drabbish!"

"The fact is, I over-estimated the powers of that dash of gravy, and put too much water after all," was Chris's frank confession. "Now I have made way for you and your grid, Jimmy."

But at the same moment came a voice from the bars.

"It just shows how you've messed about with your gravy: my steak is done as soon as your chop. It strikes me we'd better make a preliminary onslaught on these and postpone Jimmy's grill. I may not be a cook, but I *am* a stoker, and my name's not Gus Howard if that fire is right for grilling!"

"Wisdom by experience," put in Teddy; "next time you draw lots remember the *griller* has first turn at the fire—that is, if it's ready—it is his by right."

But Gus was putting it right; a handful of salt to subdue the flare, and some cinders to make a glow, and Jimmy felt reassured.

Then up to the table went four chairs, when a quick division of each piece of meat into four was succeeded by so hasty a consumption that an on-looker would have pronounced the quartette, or, to be correct, the trio, in danger of choking. Jimmy was the exception; he was too intent in watching the fire to give much attention to other than his own meat, and, suddenly slipping from his seat, he was heard to ejaculate, "Perfection!"—talking aloud being one of his habits.

But he had also the capacity for taking pains; when he failed, which was seldom, it was from forgetfulness, never from carelessness. No fear of a dirty grill from Jimmy! He rubbed the bars first with paper, then with a cloth, held the grid to the fire to heat, rubbed again, next went over the bars, with a bit of dripping, then (his eyes on his watch) on went his chop, which he turned in a few seconds, when there came such a spluttering and frizzling, such a flare up and smell of fat, that the others sprang from their seats involuntarily, but were soon re-seated on seeing the gridiron poised in the air, while a handful of salt subdued the flame.

"How did it happen?" was the natural question. "What were you after? had you gone to sleep?"

"No, satire, gentlemen! I suddenly remembered that the gridiron should be slanted—so it says in that book;" nodding in the direction of that table; "*I* had placed it straight, so I seized the handle, which was hot, naturally, and, a still more natural sequence: I dropped it! But the book also says that a chop should be nearly black outside—*that* is certainly guaranteed; if it only attains the proper tint within, there will be no cause to grumble."

And as Jimmy went on, with his grid raised to prevent further charring, watching the hands of the watch, and turning conscientiously every minute, he was heard to murmur, "Right! Grilled meat *does* want all your attention—beautifully puffy!—sure it's good meat—ever so much bigger than when I started—wonder if it's done, it's had a quarter of an hour—I'll give it another minute, though; it's a cold night, and I shouldn't like it to be blue in the middle." Then, pressing it with his finger, "No, it isn't spongy! feels firm—must not waste a minute now, or it will be as hard as nails—nice and thick it is!—weighed over half a pound I should say."

Then, "Are you ready? A nice little snack each; don't touch *my* plate, or you'll be burnt; and here are three more in the same condition. No sauce—hunger is the best—but I've put a dust of pepper on, and here are butter and——"

"No, Jimmy! it's splendid! any addition would spoil it," the first stroke of the knife inducing such a stream of gravy that it was declared to be nothing short of a sin to divide such a dainty *plat* into four, but no one volunteered to "stand out," as Gus put it; and if it be a special characteristic of a well-grilled chop that the mouth of the eater is in danger of being burnt, Jimmy had hit the mark. And very critically was the chop eaten.

"No need to hurry over this, it will keep hot to the finish. We had to bolt the others because they were half-cold to start with; but how did you get your plates so hot? there's no oven," inquired Teddy.

"I had secured a 'medium'—that big pan of boiling water there—and my plates were taking a bath while my meat cooked."

"Bravo, Jimmy! You would be equal to cooking meat on the point of a soldier's bayonet, and baking bread in hot ashes, but I am strongly of opinion that the beauty of your grill is the result of your accident."

"I am sure of it," said Jimmy, exultingly. "I saw it recommended by one writer, but I dared not have tried in cold blood."

"What! to drop your meat into the fire?"

"No, but the next thing to it; he says, 'Put a bit of fat in the fire to make a splutter, and hold your chop in it, and, however black, there will be no nasty taste, assuming your fire to be all right—a different thing to blacking over smoke.' There's chemistry in it when you come to think, and, no doubt, it is right."

"Yes," said Gus, "just as I was wrong to try and toast my meat without turning; you were not watching—you were all intent on gravy. I thought to myself that it *might* make no difference to cook the one side first, and then the other, but it did, though."

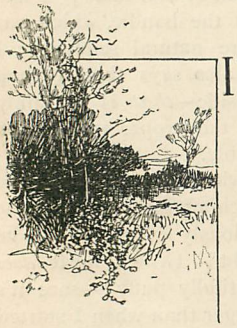
"True, but there was an excuse for you, for one can't take hot meat from a hot fork and turn it as easily as a piece of bread. But haven't we proved that grilling and broiling are two things? We need not trouble to perfect our broiling; we'll stick to the grill in future *when* the fire permits. To-morrow, Teddy is going to sift out why the flavour of a grill is so different from anything else. He has his own theory, and he is not far wrong, I'm sure; something about a current of air round it, and contact with the fire, isn't it, Teddy?"

"Not to-night! It is getting late," and, springing to his feet, he bade his friends a hasty good-night, and was out of hearing before the echoes of their shout to "come for another match" had died away.

DEBORAH PLATTER.

CHRISTMAS AT HOLLYBUSH MANOR.

BY OUR AMATEUR GARDENER.



IT was Christmas Eve, and, what is more, it was real Christmas weather: not one of those uncomfortable and so-called unseasonable "Green Yules" which are more suggestive of a moist and steamy day in June, but there was a veritable hard frost on the day of which we are speaking; for snow was beginning to fall, and to whiten still more intensely every bough and twig already covered with crystal rime, while upon the long pond on Fairfield Common, as you approached it, could be heard that somewhat dismal, wailing sound caused by the boots and skates of those who, for sport or for warmth, were gliding over the ice. For, at the best, winter is a forlorn time: we more or less dread its approach, and we are, all of us, glad to turn the corner of the year when we hail Christmas with unfeigned delight, as its associations, whether of a social or of a higher nature, not to speak of its loving re-unions, not only help us to forget the cheerless exterior, the fog and catarrh, but serve to remind us of a re-union where there will be no empty chairs, which occasion some of us now a momentary pang.

Well, and on Fairfield pond this bright crisp morning we recognise among the merry skaters some familiar faces; half the youth of the village seem to be congregated on the ice; there, coming down the whole length of it, at top speed, and with plenty of laughter, are George, Tom, and Nelly Singleton, while Mr. Haredale and his sister, on their way to the church to superintend the Christmas decorations, had been induced to have a warm quarter of an hour on the ice.

"You will give us a helping hand, will you not, by and by, Miss Nelly?" said Mr. Haredale, with a somewhat careful but cheerful politeness in his voice.

"Oh, of course, Mr. Haredale. Amy and I will both do what we can, and I think my uncle is coming up too for a while, as he is always interested in the arrangement of holly and evergreens." All this was said by her easily enough, and without any sort of confusion, as she had never in the slightest degree reciprocated any imaginary attentions of the young clerical tutor: while on his part he had never allowed any passing thought or amusement occasioned by the young and giddy girl to ripen into anything like affection, so that any sort of solemn interview in the library with old Mr. Singleton, which Tom and George both, strange to say, still thought would one day come to pass, was really in Mr. Haredale's mind postponed *sine die*. Not that he had jilted the girl, but for all that, lookers-on, as is generally the case, had not quite made up their mind; although the two that were really concerned knew perfectly well that, as the old ladies say, "nothing would come of it."

Ever and anon, however, and particularly when wheels were heard thundering along the hard high road that almost immediately adjoined the pond, the young Singletons, one and all, cast curious and expectant faces, to see if the carriage had come back from the station whither they knew it had gone with the old gentleman inside to bring up some guests that were expected for Christmas: bluff Major Merriman, with his son and daughter, Charles and Edith, an old Indian friend of Mr. Singleton's. The Major's stay

"COMING DOWN THE POND AT FULL SPEED" (*p.* 80).

was to be only a short one, and as he was almost as great in horticulture as Mr. Singleton himself, the younger members of the family expected a great dose of gardening; but their interest was naturally keener in wild young Charles Merriman, who was expected to remain some months, for the purpose of reading with Mr. Haredale; while the Major also hoped that the gentle influence of Amy Singleton might for a like period have a beneficial effect upon his spoilt little vixen daughter Edith, of seventeen, who had already given him a good deal of trouble.

An hour later, and the whole party were at luncheon at the Manor, quietly "taking stock" of one another, for the younger ones had never met before.

"Oh, Amy!" suddenly exclaimed Nelly, at the end of some laughter—for although the new arrivals were strangers in all but their name, the spirits of the party were rapidly overflowing—"we must not forget to help the Haredales this afternoon to wreathe those fat Norman pillars in the church, and there are miles of holly lying on the chancel floor already, I know, waiting for us." The Major here gave a little amused twinkle with his eyes at the demonstrative and irrepressible young lady who had just spoken, but her observations had given him an opportunity for embarking on a favourite theme. "You are great in evergreens, Singleton, I see," said he, looking round the handsomely decorated room; "you seem to have every possible variety. You must take me round the domain presently, you know, before it gets dark."

"Uncle," interposed Amy, in a soft and quiet voice, "I don't believe we have any mistletoe in the garden?"

"Indeed, but, my dear, we have, though."

"Miss Amy seems concerned in the question," put in the Major, and in the general little laugh which ensued poor Amy suddenly remembered it was Christmas Eve, and all the unkind scarlet holly berries in the room seemed to crowd at once on her innocent face, and she was glad when the Major, with abrupt interest, asked her uncle quickly how he raised this popular decoration.

"Well," said Mr. Singleton, "mistletoe is reared in a singular way: about the end of last February I sowed some on an apple-tree——" Nelly here exploded with an incredulous laugh as if she thought her uncle was what George called "cramming them," and she was glad that Amy, rising from the table, had broken up the party, and left the two old amateur gardeners to themselves. Hardly heeding the interruption, Mr. Singleton continued: "You make a couple of cuts, just like a capital V, on the under-side of an apple-tree branch; cut well down to the wood, and you have a sort of tongue-shaped piece of bark, which you can then gently lift up—only, of course, care must be taken not to break off the tongue as you raise it."

"I see," said the Major, with growing interest.

"Well, underneath this tongue of apple-tree bark you then place one or two seeds that have been just recently squeezed from out a mistletoe berry, then merely press the tongue back gently in its place, and Dame Nature will do the rest. Provided you have put in some good seeds, your little seedling plant will before long make its appearance."

"I notice," said Major Merriman, "that you seemed to attach importance to the *side* of the branch on which you make your incision; is that so?"

"Certainly, it is of importance," added Mr. Singleton, "for if you made your cut with the knife, say, on the *upper* or exposed side of the branch, you would get an accumulation of water in the cut, and the seed would probably rot and fail therefore entirely, and a like failure would also follow if, instead of much rain, a hot sun were to scorch the whole lot up; whereas, by opening the bark *underneath*, you gain shelter alike from sun and wet. But come out now and go round, before darkness sets in, for I promised presently to look in at the church."

"You can, of course," asked the Major, "raise the mistletoe by grafting, can you not?"

"Oh, certainly, but hardly by grafting on *any* sort of tree," replied Mr. Singleton; "though fortunately both apple and pear-trees are popular with the mistletoe, which is well for us in our old English gardens. One of our best garden authorities says that the first half of May is about the best time for mistletoe grafting, and moreover, that it should never be inserted less than five or more than ten feet from the ground. On making an incision in the bark of the tree, insert a thin spray of the mistletoe—a piece, in fact, having a bud and but one leaf at the end."

"Ah!" broke in Major Merriman, as they were walking round and commenting on anything worthy of note for the season, "those are fine Christmas roses."

"Yes; but though so hardy, they prefer, more particularly in weather like this, a fairly sheltered situation, and then, when the plants are well established, they will bloom in profusion and very lovely they certainly are. Speaking of the hellebore—this, of course, is the *helleborus niger*—but the white hellebore is a fine thing to destroy the gooseberry caterpillar with."

"Yes," replied the Major, "but Christmas Eve is 'early days' on which to discuss even early gooseberries."

A quarter of an hour later Mr. Singleton found himself, according to promise, giving a little advice as to the evergreen arrangement in the church.

"Well, Miss Nelly," said the Major, "your fat Norman pillars are not, you know, anything like so fat as those at Tewkesbury or at Durham."

"Still, sir," she replied, "they are fat enough to give us a good deal of trouble to dress them in holiday attire."

A few hours more, and Christmas Day was upon them, and the thick white dress of snow which had fallen all around in the night served to hush softly the peal of bells which awoke them early in the morning, making yet merrier the hearts of the merry, and bringing smiles to brush away the tears from the eyes of those who were given to dwell fondly upon the past. Perhaps Amy Singleton was one of these last named, as she was thinking of her mother, who had died in India when she was but a child.

THE WOOING OF MARY CARSTAIRS.

BY GEORGE B. BURGIN, AUTHOR OF "A QUAKER GIRL," ETC.

"OH, Mary!"

"Yes, Harry?"

"I asked Deane as well as Ducaine to dine with us to-night. Thought you'd dispense with a longer notice; it's too late to get anyone else. Isn't he rather 'spoons' on one of the Spencers?"

Mary Carstairs paused for a moment on the landing. "Really Harry, you are sickeningly slangy. That is scarcely the way to speak of a clergyman."

Harry Carstairs gave a prolonged whistle expressive of surprise. "He—he hasn't been one very long," he said.

Mary relented as she ran upstairs. "Case dismissed with a caution;" and she went to her room to dress for dinner.

Harry stared after her in amazement. "As if a curate isn't mortal," he muttered.

Mary entered her room with flaming cheeks. "What fearful expressions men do pick up," she said.

"They do, Miss," was the unexpected reply from Perkins, her maid, as she emerged from the dressing-room. "'Orrid! Worse than the servants' 'all."

"That will do, Perkins. I didn't know you were there. What dress are you going to deck me with to-night?"

"The cream colour, Miss. With glorified John roses to match."

Mary reflected. "Put out the black one instead, please. The roses will do."

Perkins took away the despised garment with a muttered allusion to the mournful uncertainty of mundane things. "It's rather nice for a—a funeral, Miss Mary," she said, returning with a black dress of some soft material.

"I don't *dine* at funerals, Perkins. Please don't; that will do."

"And who's to do your 'air, Miss?" whimpered Perkins. "I know I'm in the shere and yellow leaf, but I can do 'air."

Mary resigned herself to the inevitable. "Oh, very well, Perkins."

Her toilette completed, she stood looking at her pretty face and figure in the glass. Suddenly, she threw up her hands with a little gesture of despair. "What's to be done?" she demanded of the serious blue eyes which gazed back at her. "Whatever is to be done?"

She sank down in a chair, and pinned the yellow roses on her breast. "Why—why did Fate make him a clergyman?" she said to the face in the glass. "Why did Fate make him a clergyman, and with such a—such a keen sense of the ludicrous?"

There was no answer from the gracious face in the glass. But Mary was in a questioning mood. "He is dreadfully shy," she said. "And so am I. There is always some indefinable barrier between us. I can be pleasant and natural enough with others. So can he. Then I see him, and it is as if two icebergs had met in mid-Atlantic and were bent on displaying a mutual coolness with regard to the right of way. Oh, dear!" She stamped her pretty foot in acute vexation. "Of course, I can't do anything, and he can't do anything; nobody can do anything, which is sad but true. I am sure—positive—certain—that he likes me a little; and I? Oh well, hadn't I better wait before I ask myself anything more?"

She paused with her hand on the door. "I know so well what it will be like," she said. "Of course, Harry doesn't even guess. Men never do see anything right under their—their moustaches. It must be because they are always pulling them about so. I know very well what Harry thinks—that it is Captain Ducaine. But it isn't. It never will be Captain Ducaine. There!"

With a toss of her pretty head and its crown of bright golden hair, Mary Carstairs went downstairs—to discover the object of her musings nervously employed looking out of the window.

Julian Deane was pulling his black moustache about. He was in that perplexed frame of mind when a man must have something to torture. He hadn't the courage to face the situation as if it were new—most people in love are conscious that it is not an original act of theirs: so he mournfully pulled his moustache. He was a curate; and he was painfully aware that a shy curate—a man who is very much in love with a beautiful girl who has more money than himself—is in a difficult position when he wants to declare his love, and does not wish to be thought mercenary or ridiculous by people who are always ready to see the worst side of human nature. There were so many fantastic legends current of slippers and braces with regard to the curate of fiction. People of the nineteenth century—people known to possess ordinary intelligence—were unable to grasp the fact that a curate is far too busy doing his Master's work nowadays to have time or inclination for the absurdities which are placed to his credit in the brainless fiction of the circulating libraries. But he felt himself tied hand and foot by tradition.

He loved Mary Carstairs devotedly. Things had come to such a pass that he could not believe he had ever existed without her. She was so sweet, so beautiful that his whole heart went out to her with infinite longing. He wanted her to help him bear the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, to sweeten his whole life; and the first obstacle in the way—a veritable lion in the path—was their mutual consciousness that however truly and devotedly they might love, the world would place but one interpretation on it—that the primrose path would be littered with braces and slippers and ecclesiastical frippery of the flimsiest kind. And there was Captain Ducaine—the man who talked of "mowing down niggers," as if they were ninepins. Would he not mow down Julian also as if he were a ninepin? Why couldn't the world let them alone, and——

The rustling of Mary's dress put an end to his reflections as she came in with a pretty air of welcome. Julian crossed the room to her side, glancing eagerly at her beautiful face and luxuriant hair tied back with a ribbon to match the roses. The black dress had swelling sleeves which tightened at the elbows in some mysterious way known only to the feminine mind. How tall and slim and girlish she looked, as, with sweet dignity, she stood before him in all the glory of her youth and youthful beauty. How many girls of one-and-twenty possessed so much manner—so great a charm?

For a moment, they forgot their shyness and the ridicule which an unsympathetic world might attach to their love-story. "I fear I am an infliction," he said. "Oughtn't a hostess always to have at least a week's notice?"

"Certainly not in the country, Mr. Deane. Harry is delighted when he can induce people to drop in."

"And Harry's sister?" he said tentatively.

"Oh, we are too much alike in our tastes to differ. We have lived in the country so long that we like to dispense with formalities."

"It is very good of you both to remember my loneliness."

"Loneliness! I believed you were more in evidence than anyone else in the parish."

"Ah, that's during the day. When the swallows and rooks fly homeward, I do the same."

Really, this was a great improvement. They were chatting quite freely. One of her yellow roses fell to the floor. He stooped to pick it up. Should he return it to her, or ask permission to keep it?

"HER BROTHER TOOK HER LITTLE HAND IN HIS OWN GREAT ONE" (*p.* 87).

Mary smilingly divined his thoughts. Would he dare to ask for it?

He picked up the rose, and looked questioningly at Mary. Her lips had almost parted in answer to his unspoken request, when it all came back to them. The curate of romance always asked for a rose from his lady love—and—and pawed it, and clawed it about when he got it. Here was this great, sweet, original love-story of theirs transforming the world for them, carpeting it with roses, and when they went to pick up the roses they scratched their fingers with commonplace thorns and slowly congealed into two despairing nineteenth century conventionalities—one in a long black coat, the other in a long black dress.

He stood there, holding the rose in his hand. Then he returned it with a stiff little bow. "Allow me, Miss Carstairs."

"Thank you," said Mary, in a tone which she felt to be frigidly repellent. "Icily null," Lord Tennyson would have called it.

She laid the rose carelessly on the table. "Captain Ducaine also dines with us to-night," she said.

"Who's taking my name in vain, Miss Carstairs?" asked the canary-haired captain, as he

appeared in the doorway. "That's very unkind of you."

"Not at all," said Mary. "You know Mr. Deane, I believe, Captain Ducaine."

The men bowed antagonistically. "Played cricket with him the other day," said Captain Ducaine. "Knocked my bowling—MY bowling—all over the field. MY bowling, mind you."

"An unpardonable liberty," laughed Mary.

The Captain was not deficient in humour, and rather prided himself on his bowling. "See if I can't score off him now," he reflected, vacuously stroking the canary-coloured down on his upper lip. "Miss Carstairs, may I?" He picked up the rose from the table and held it towards her.

"Certainly," said Mary, inwardly wishing Captain Ducaine at the North Pole, or Equatorial Africa, or Kew Gardens, or any other remote equivalent. Could anything have happened more inopportunely? But a refusal would have made matters worse.

The captain nonchalantly stuck the rose in his button-hole—stuck it in his button-hole with the lack of tenderness which he would have bestowed on a cabbage, or turnip, or some equally commonplace garden produce. Then the dinner-gong sounded, and Harry Carstairs entered the room.

"Allow me," said the Captain, jutting out his arm with a graceful curve; and Mary was marched off in her misery, Harry and Julian Deane bringing up the rear.

Once or twice during dinner, Mary glanced at the curate's face. What an interminable meal it was, although the captain and the curate got on very well together. They were both public-school men, and if public-school men were to meet in a fire escape they would exchange notes before sliding down to the bottom. Although Julian told some good stories, Mary felt that there was an undercurrent in his voice which was meant for her alone. Once, Julian Deane's glance fell on the rose—Captain Ducaine's rose—which had broken off short and reclined by the side of his plate. Mary fancied that there was a slight frown on his brow. The other man had won the prize; and that was the way he valued it—Goth! Vandal! Iconoclast! that he was!

When Mary rose to leave the room, the Curate opened the door for her. Their eyes met for a moment. Mary felt that he deserved some compensation for his courage under rather trying circumstances. Her look must have conveyed this feeling, for Julian returned to the table as one for whom life still had compensations.

Captain Ducaine picked up the rose from the table, and abruptly pulled it to pieces, keeping his eye firmly fixed on the Rev. Julian as he did so. "Shame to pull it to bits," he drawled; "but the stalk's gone. No wonder it's lost its head."

"The yellow canker worm is rather destructive about here," said the Curate indifferently, as he gazed at the Captain's duckling-hued hair.

"Ya—as," drawled out the Captain. "That's why summer roses fade, I suppose, and all that sort of thing doncherknow." He wondered whether the Curate had dared to be sarcastic. "Disgustingly bad form" if he had.

"Another cigar?" said Harry to the Captain. "No? Then we'll join my sister. You're not going, Deane?"

"You promised to let me go at nine."

"Nonsense, man. We can't send you out into the heartless world in this way. You'll think life is all smoke if we do. Come upstairs first, and Mary will give you some tea."

And Julian Deane yielded—to the Captain's great disgust.

"It's beastly bad form," said that ordinarily good-natured officer, whilst donning his gorgeous dressing-gown, preparatory to a quiet think in his bed-room. "Beastly! There's no other word for it," and he savagely kicked a dress-shoe into the bath before seeking his couch. Later on, a moonbeam found its way into the room and woke him up. "Beastly bad form, you know," he said to it, appealingly, and, like Dr. Watts's sluggard, slumbered again.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

ONE bright afternoon a few weeks later, Julian Deane, like the ploughman, homeward plodded his weary way. He had just come from a death-bed—a death-bed which had not been an edifying one. He was glad to see the sunlight again. For a few minutes, he felt downcast. The world was in no haste to think of weighty things. It rather preferred to avoid them. Julian Deane had many battles to fight single-handed—battles against infidelity, sloth, disease, criminal ignorance; and as he emerged into the sunlight, it seemed to him that all these battles would be so much easier to endure with the aid of Mary Carstairs. It was not good for man to be alone, he repeated to himself, as he trod the dusty road. It was not good for man—especially a clerical man—to be left to the rough and somewhat careless mercies of old Mrs. Hitchcock, who "did" for him at his rooms. There was a peculiar sameness about her "doing" for him, which palled upon the Rev. Julian, and might, in time, if matters were not remedied, result in an inquest. Then he reproached himself for thinking of such trifles, set his feet firmly in the dusty road, and turned his face towards Mrs. Hitchcock's modest abode. She would "do" for him as it seemed good unto her, but, if he could only get his own way, there would perhaps come a time when she would be superfluous—an Old Woman of the Sea to let fall into the limbo of forgotten things.

As he hurried on to the village, Harry Carstairs came bounding out of the Hall gate, clad in a crimson blazer and tennis flannels. He held a racquet in his hand, and seemed rather vexed. "Is that you, Deane?" he said. "I've waited half-an-hour for Ducaine and Mary. I wish people would remember when they make a promise, instead of—well, I suppose one may call it spooning. I'll come along with you. Bashford wants to see me about putting up a fence in front of the old quarry there at the corner. He says some tipsy carter is certain to drive into it."

"Come on," said Julian, setting his teeth at the allusion to Mary and Ducaine. "You know, Carstairs, you should have seen to that place before!"

"I know," said Harry, swinging along with giant strides. "I'll speak to Bashford, and get it done at once. Hope to goodness nothing will happen before it is put up. I don't want to have 'some undone orphan sit upon mine arm.'"

"It's a nasty curve," said Julian, looking at the spot a few minutes later. "Anyone coming round the corner—" He stopped with a frightened "S—s—sh! What's that?" and clutched Harry's arm.

"Pshaw, nothing man," said Harry, passing on to the village. "All this talk has made you nervous. Come on."

But the Rev. Julian was already running.

Harry easily overtook him. "My word, you're right, Deane. There's someone powdering along on a badly-frightened horse or I'm a Dutchman!"

It was Ducaine.

Ducaine sat squarely back in the saddle, trying to get a pull on the mouth of his maddened horse. The music of a Punch and Judy show could be heard shrilling across the village green. Suddenly, Ducaine lost his temper. He dug his spurs into his horse, and commenced to punish it with a light cutting-whip.

"He doesn't know of the quarry," gasped Deane. "They'll gallop right into it. Come along, Carstairs. We must stop him."

Carstairs bounded along at his side. "This is my business, Deane. I'll have to stop him for—for Mary's sake. Don't you see, she's behind."

"Nonsense," shouted Julian. "It's bound to be a bad smash. No one will miss me much." And he put on a spurt.

Carstairs wondered at his tone, but cut the matter short in his own characteristic way. "Bosh!" he said. "The man's my chum, and Mary's fond of him. I'll have to risk it." His long legs easily carried him ahead of Deane, who was rather short.

Ducaine saw them coming, and shouted to Harry to get out of the way.

Harry turned and began darting back to Deane. As Ducaine's horse swept past, he sprang at it like a wild cat. There was a momentary struggle, then it tripped, flinging Ducaine heavily into the hedge and fought with Harry.

Deane got to its head, and, between them, they quieted the frightened horse. Covered with sweat, and shaking in every limb, it stood thoroughly cowed as Mary galloped up.

"It was the Punch and Judy show," she cried, jumping from her horse. "Harry, are you hurt, dear?"

"I'm all right," cried Harry hastily. "Where's Ducaine?"

Ducaine sauntered out of the briars with unruffled composure. "Beastly rude of you, Carstairs," he said, feeling for his eye-glass. "I gave the brute his head, and something else thrown in. What on earth possessed you to stop him in that insane way? He'd have pumped out soon enough."

Ducaine walked round the horse, critically examining it. "Frightfully smashed up," he groaned. "Only fit for beef-tea. Isn't worth a 'tenner,' Carstairs."

"You'd have been worth less than that in another minute," said Harry. "There's the old quar——" He staggered forward, and fell fainting into Ducaine's arms.

Ducaine laid him tenderly on the grass. "Steady, old man," he said. "Steady! That's it. Any bones broken?"

Harry sat up. "None," he said. "Give me your arm, Ducaine. Deane, will you please see after Mary?"

"Let me come with you," implored Mary, who had turned very white. "You're hurt, Harry."

"Follow us with Deane," said Harry. "Thompson" (to Mary's groom) "you lead on the horses, and pick up my racquet. Miss Carstairs will walk." And he tottered off.

"Look at that, old man," said Harry to Ducaine, as soon as they turned the corner. "That's where you were going. Nice place, isn't it?"

Ducaine walked quietly to the quarry side and looked down. Then he pitched a stone to the bottom. It struck at last. "Thanks," he said to Harry. "That's quite good enough for me. Left arm broken?"

"Yes," said Harry. "I didn't want Mary to know. Come on."

"All right," laconically said Ducaine. "I'll make a note of it. Curate running up to do the same?"

"Yes, only my legs were longer."

"Plucky beggar!" said Ducaine; and fell into a brown study.

Julian Deane and Mary stood silently regarding the hedge which had so hospitably received Ducaine. "Is—is Harry badly hurt?" she asked.

"No," said the Curate. "I'm sorry I didn't get there first."

"Why?" asked Mary wonderingly.

"Why? Oh, it wouldn't have mattered if I had been smashed up; you would have been happy."

"I don't understand you," said Mary proudly. "I am very glad Captain Ducaine was not hurt, but——" She stopped in her turn.

"But what?" he asked, eagerly taking her hand. "But what, Mary?"

Mary burst into tears. Then she began to smile. "I—I never was so—so thankful before that Harry had long legs," she said. "He is accustomed to deal with horses, and you're not. You might have been k—killed."

"And if I had been killed, would you have cared?"

"Yes," said Mary simply.

They walked down the dusty road, past the old quarry, without looking at it. Their hearts were too full of happiness for speech. And they hadn't even time to remember what the world would say about it. A jubilant thrush sang from the top of a lofty elm. "K—k—k—kiss her swe—e—eet—ly, sweet, sweet, sweet—ly," and was so pertinacious that his behest had to be obeyed. "I don't see Harry," said Mary anxiously as they entered the house.

"He would like to see you presently when his arm is set," said Ducaine. "He made me promise to keep you away, Miss Carstairs, until the doctors had done with him."

Mary gave a little cry of distress. An hour later, she was admitted to Harry's room. "Are you much hurt, dear?" she said, as she sat down on the bed, and her brother took her little hand in his own great brown one.

Harry laughed at the idea. "Ducaine's a good fellow, Mary," he said, "but the sooner your marriage takes place the better for me. I shan't have to look after him for you."

Mary blushed. "If you are well enough I should like to—to speak to you about my marriage," she said.

"Of course I'm well enough. Then he got it over before the horse bolted?"

"No, he didn't, Harry."

"Look here, Mary," Harry protested. "You'll have to make up your mind soon. I discovered something about Deane this afternoon. The poor chap's madly in love with you."

"I—I made a discovery, too, this afternoon, Harry."

"What is it?" he said resignedly. "Doctor says I mustn't be 'worrited,' but I think I can stand this. I wonder you didn't choose Deane, Mary."

"Do you?" she asked demurely. Then she let go his hand, and put her lips to his ear. "You—you great goose, Harry. Now, don't faint. You're—you're quite ready?"

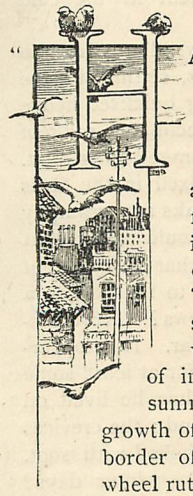
"Go on," he said resignedly. "My pulse is a hundred and ten, but that's only a detail. Most people die when it's just over a hundred. It will either kill or cure me. Fire away!"

"Don't laugh, Harry," she said; "I'm so hap—hap—happy."

"Pulse one hundred and forty-five," said Harry, solemnly; "another moment's suspense will be fatal."

"It *is* Julian after all," she said. And then she wept, in the manner of women whose hearts are full of happiness.

"NOTHING BUT SPARROWS AND BLACKBIRDS."



"HAVE you many birds in your neighbourhood?"

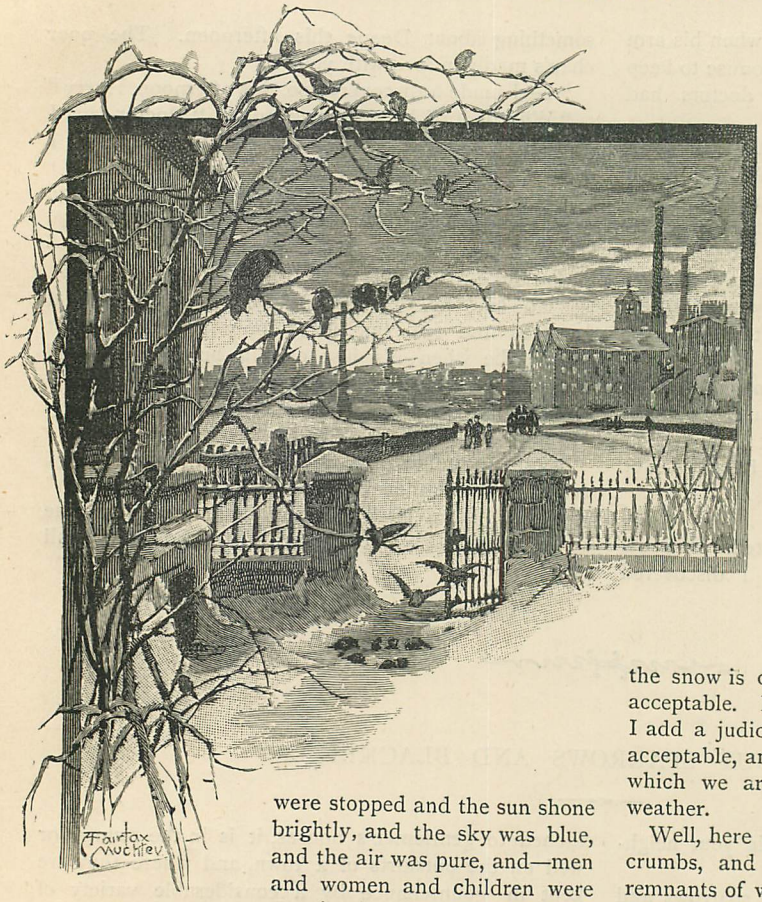
"No; nothing but sparrows and blackbirds."

This was a question once asked, and an answer received, from a person found sitting on a stile in a leafy lane in the Midlands, with whom I had casually entered into conversation. The question was suggested by our surroundings. The air was overflowing with the songs of birds and the hum of insects, for it was the glorious early summer-time. Trees and hedges, the thick growth of herbage in the ditch, and the broad border of grass that stretched to the waggon-wheel ruts were all full of movement and life.

* * * * * *

It is now winter, and I have been for some months a resident in the very neighbourhood referred to in the above scrap of conversation. Though my chance acquaintance of that summer day's stroll spoke in perfect good faith, his words suggested in their very matter hesitancy of belief, for blackbirds are not such frequenters of human habitations, such lovers of human society, as to be found along with the sparrows in localities from which other birds have been driven by the activity and noise, the bricks and mortar, of men. They are birds of a rather retiring disposition, have something of the awkwardness of shy persons; and though they do indeed build in the grounds attached to gentlemen's houses, it is in the country or well on the outskirts of a town, and where they are kept in countenance by a considerable variety of feathered fellow creatures. "Nothing but sparrows and blackbirds" did not commend itself to belief as a true account of the case; but I have found that in this part of the country the name "blackbird" is commonly given to the starling. It was this bird that my acquaintance meant, though at the time I did not know or even suspect it. "Starlings and sparrows" is a more congruous combination, for both these birds enjoy an hereditary right to human service. Has it not been handed down in their traditional lore that men have been created and taught the art of architecture for the express purpose of providing spouts and gutters in which the sparrows may build their nests, and chimneys to make up for a deficiency of hollow trees in providing a like convenience for the starlings?

Even where I live—which, fortunately for me, as a lover of the country, is a little outside the town—a not too curious observer might be excused for seeing nothing but sparrows and starlings. These he would see on the roofs and in the fields around, and probably these only. We are proud of our factory chimneys, and complacently watch the black smoke issuing from them that tells of busy industry. When some satisfactory method of consuming it has been invented and commends itself to the manufacturing mind, we shall be glad to see an abatement of "the smoke nuisance." But we desire no return of the terrible days of the cotton famine, when all the mills



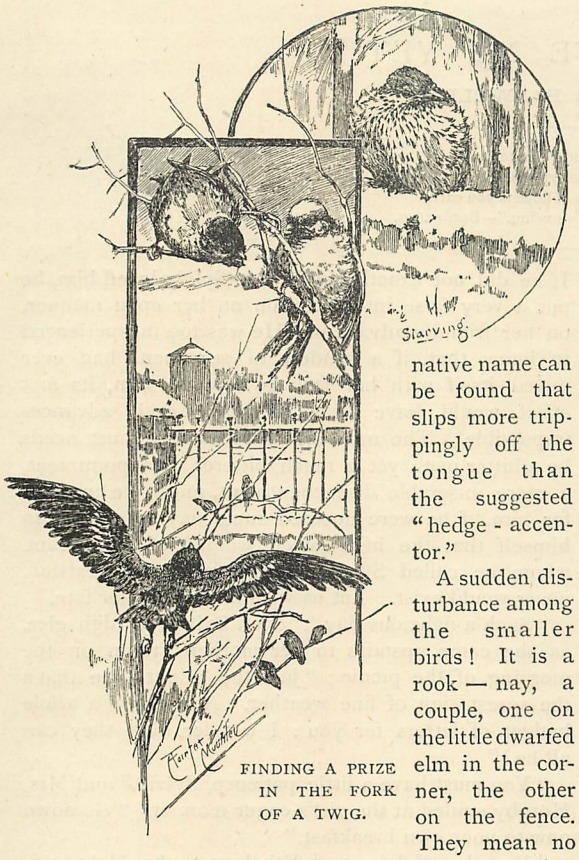
BREAKFAST-TIME.

were stopped and the sun shone brightly, and the sky was blue, and the air was pure, and—men and women and children were starving! No; we glory in these tall chimneys and their dusky plumes streaming in the air. At the same time, we do not claim for them any special beauty, nor do we deny a pollution of the atmosphere. But worse than the smoke, though less obvious to the eye, are the fumes of certain chemical works. The evidence of their deadly power is to be seen in the gradual dying of our trees and in the hopeless colour of our grass.

But the sparrow takes no exception to such things as these. He rather shares the pride of his human friend in his restless industry, though he continues to associate with him at some cost to his personal appearance—for the sooty little bird that frequents the streets of a Lancashire town is blackened almost out of all likeness to his brother of a Kentish or Sussex homestead. The starling, too, stands by us, even though we build factories and defile the atmosphere. The fields around my house afford him exercise and, presumably, food, for he spends a good deal of his time in them, while my chimneys are one of the selected spots for the establishment of his nurseries, as I discovered to my inconvenience more than once last summer when a bird of full size, but evidently not of mature judgment, came down into the room, bringing with him soot and confusion that I could well have spared.

But it is winter now. The frost has sealed the ground, and the snow has followed. "Only sparrows and blackbirds." Truly we have nothing to compare with the feathered wealth of the Midland woods, but in the little enclosure before my window—which some of my friends kindly call a garden—I am proving to-day how inadequate an account of our bird life is that answer. The snow is swept away from the path, and a generous gift of bread-crumbs scattered on it out of regard for the conventionalism of such charity. For have not bread-crumbs been the staple eleemosynary dole for bird dependents since the ancient "time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary?" And who am I that I should turn reformer, and know better than my fathers? Besides, bread-crumbs are cleanly and easy things to collect from the breakfast table, and when the snow is on the ground prove not altogether unacceptable. But while thus paying tribute to custom, I add a judicious supply of suet, as being yet more acceptable, and as affording that oleaginous element which we are taught is so expedient in the cold weather.

Well, here are indeed the sparrows, discussing the crumbs, and here are the starlings, settling in the remnants of what was once a strong quickset hedge around a garden, and is now a decimated rank of hawthorn bushes guarding a discouraged grass-plat. They have soon found out the suet fixed in the forks of the twigs, and their neat sharp beaks are promptly busy. But here is a visitor. I should know that movement, yet who can recognise in that grimy ball of feathers the little blue-tit that ought to be sporting a uniform of blues and greens and yellows? Nevertheless, it is he. And he has not come far. His appearance testifies that he has been living for at least some time in a smoke-charged air. What has he lived on all the summer? Insects do not abound; the crevices in which he would seek them are choked with soot. And what does he live on in these winter days? Surely his struggle for existence has been a fierce one! But he is happy just now, as he toys with a morsel in the pathway, then slips into the hawthorns to investigate what is wedged between their branches and fixed upon their thorns. And now here comes a robin, with a confident carriage that a gamecock might envy. Neither sparrow nor starling expect an apology from him for hopping into the very centre of their circle—taking the head of the table, as one might call it. In striking contrast with his bold, cavalier-like attitude is the gentle, ladylike movement, full of grace, though free from all timidity, of the little hedge-sparrow, which we are constantly being told is not a sparrow at all, and ought not to be called such, but which most assuredly will be called such till an alter-



FINDING A PRIZE IN THE FORK OF A TWIG.

native name can be found that slips more trippingly off the tongue than the suggested "hedge-accentor."

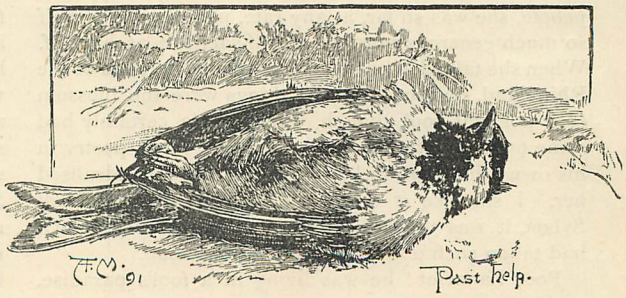
A sudden disturbance among the smaller birds! It is a rook — nay, a couple, one on the little dwarfed elm in the corner, the other on the fence. They mean no harm, but their bulk is an offence to robins, sparrows, and birds of their size. One of them is now appropriating a store I wedged into the fork of a dead tree stump with a special thought of his necessities, for when I was distributing my benefaction I noticed him—or his fellow—intently watching me at a distance of less than twenty yards. In agricultural counties, where there is much arable land, and where the rook is shot at, and, when shot, hung by one leg to swing ignominiously and warningly in the field, he is a shy bird. In such localities it would be vain to provide for his coming into your garden within six yards of your window. But I had already discovered how much less suspicious is the Lancashire rook, and thought it not unlikely he would come. And I am not disappointed. He has come, and his brother with him, although the manner of the brother is not altogether free from nervousness. He does little more than parade the fence, and watch the bolder birds enjoying the food spread below.

And now the number of the starlings is increasing, and among them is a strange-looking bird. His movements are not those of a starling, who walks—having learned the art, perhaps, from the rook—and bettered the instruction, for he certainly has a more respectable gait than the larger bird. But this strange bird hops, and that none too well; yet he has the form and colour and almost the size of a starling, though coming short a little in this last particular. Poor bird! He is a starling, truly, but he has lost a leg. How, it were idle to surmise: clearly there are troubles and accidents in starling households. But among the new comers is a yet more pitiful object—a poor, blackened, and obviously feeble, thrush. His feathers are all puffed out as though to keep the cold air at as great a distance from his body as possible, and his legs seem to lack the strength to keep his body off the ground. He flops along in sad contrast with the lively spring that we see in the summer days when he is busy on the garden lawn worm-pulling. The sparrows make way for him as he clumsily, helplessly flops, as I have called it, in among them. They cannot surely be moved by fear of such a creature; let us believe that they respect his wretchedness. They are Sir Philip Sidneys, who say, "Thy necessity is greater than ours."

And now he goes up on to the branch of the tree overhead, and sits there "all of a heap." I rejoice that he has had a meal—a good one—though, from his looks, I fear relief has come too late. Privation has already done its work, and next spring will miss his song. Let him rest while he may, however, undisturbed. But I have to go into town, and so must, perforce, disturb him by opening the door and passing under the bare bough on which he sits. With the indifference of despair, he sits on and takes no notice. On my return—in about an hour's time—he is still there. And now his mate is on the ground, and, to my surprise, there is a blackbird come to join the number of my friends; not a starling this, passing himself off for the songster, but a true blackbird—"the ousel cock so black of hue"—the merle—*turdus merula.* He flies away as I come in at the gate, but I am glad to see, as I look from the window a little later, that he has returned.

Clearly this smoke-poisoned district possesses feathers of more varied hue than all suspect, though it does its best to disguise the variety in a smoky uniformity of colour. In my summer rambles in the neighbourhood I had found that, notwithstanding all unfavourable circumstances, "sparrows and blackbirds" did not sum up all its bird wealth, and now, to-day, a little outdoor relief is demonstrating the same fact at my own doorstep. If the frost continues there will be further proof to-morrow.

ALFRED J. BAMFORD.



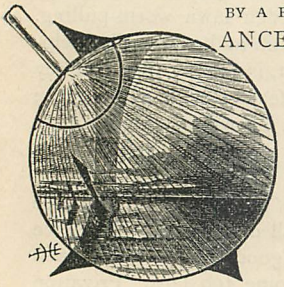
"YOU'LL LOVE ME YET."

By FRANCES HASWELL.

"You'll love me yet, and I can tarry
Your love's protracted growing;
June reared the bunch of flowers you carry
From seeds of April's sowing."—Browning.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

BY A FOREST-SIDE.



LANCELOT thought a great deal about Sylvia during the days that intervened between the gooseberry-gathering and the picnic; but Sylvia thought little enough about Lancelot. *She* did not lie awake at nights, passing in review, item by item, everything that had ever passed between them; *she* did not walk alone in the woods, picturing to herself his figure and face till they became vividly present. When she did think of him at all, it was simply as "that good-natured Mr. Bassett," to whose friendly ear she could venture to bring out her small scraps of learning or literature without finding them received with blank incomprehension, who appreciated her little jokes, who never snubbed her, who always seemed interested in herself and in all she had to say—in fact, she was very much at her ease with him.

"I can say whatever I like to Mr. Bassett," that was the way she put it.

But with Lancelot the case was altogether different. He had lived a very quiet, secluded life, with his mother, for they had few neighbours, and those not specially congenial; they had travelled, but had not made acquaintances in travelling; so that, strange as it may appear, Sylvia was the first girl with whom he had ever been on terms of intimacy, and he had found a very new fascination in her straightforward manner, her lively talk, and the very ordinary share of good looks which she possessed. He credited her with many fine feelings and thoughts, which were quite foreign to the simple girl. When she wanted money, that she might spend it on her brothers and sisters, he loved her for her unselfishness, while, in truth, though she had a good heart, and was by no means more selfish than the average of young people, she was so far, at any rate, not capable of half so much generous purpose or self-sacrifice as himself. When she talked about books, or quoted legends of the Rhineland, he thought these things were the blossom of a poetical soul, though, while Sylvia certainly had some taste for literature, there was far more poetry in his own mind than in hers. In one word, he idealised her. I suppose it was not altogether the individual Sylvia, it was the new mystery of womanhood, which had taken such a hold upon the young man.

Poor Lancelot! he was living in a fool's paradise. If he did not exactly think that Sylvia loved him, he put a very false interpretation on her open manner, on her friendly advances. He was too inexperienced to know that, if a shadow of sentiment had ever mixed itself with her feelings towards him, its first effect would have been to make such advances impossible. The moment of awakening must needs be a bitter one; yet a much bitterer disappointment, a more miserable disenchantment, might be in store for him, if he were doomed some day to confess to himself that the high-souled woman of his dream, whom he called Sylvia Hornby, never had existed, never would exist. Let us wish him a happier fate.

"Such a delicious day!" cried Sylvia, in high glee, as she came upstairs to her mother's room on the morning of the picnic; "just the bright haze that's the surest sign of fine weather. And here's a whole budget of letters for you: I wonder what they can all be?"

"You must have a little patience, Sylvia," and Mrs. Hornby smiled at the girl's eager manner. "Go down now to your own breakfast."

"I'm glad Sylvia, and Ethel, too, should have a day's pleasure," she said to herself as she sipped her tea. "They're good girls, both of them, and they don't get half so many outings as I used to have at their age."

She opened her letters; one was from a shop, one from a sister in Australia, another from a cousin. There was nothing startling in any of these. The fourth contained news which at first seemed to blunt the edge of all her faculties. It was too bad to be true; there must be some mistake. She read it through once more, then collected her energies to understand and face its significance.

Mrs. Hornby had been left a widow six years before, with a fixed income, which was barely enough to support her large family in something like the way of life they had been accustomed to. Her own ill-health had been an additional drain on her finances; indeed, her doctor had lately told her that she must in future spend all her winters on the Riviera. And this letter informed her that the bank where more than half her property was invested had failed! The blow was so sudden, so heavy, that at first she could hardly realise what had happened. It was necessary to make some plan for the future, but, at the moment, it seemed impossible; she felt lost, perplexed, stunned. She retained the presence of mind to make one resolution; she would hide the letter; she would say nothing to the children that day. The two girls had been looking forward to the picnic; they should have

this one pleasure unclouded by anticipation of the changed life—the life of difficulty and hardship—that lay before them. Next morning would be time enough for calling a family council to consider what could be done. Meanwhile, any want of cheerfulness on her part could be set down to one of her frequent headaches, for, indeed, her head was now beginning to throb most painfully.

So nothing marred the pleasure of Ethel and Sylvia as they prepared for the afternoon's expedition, unless it were the loudly-expressed envy of the younger members of the family.

"I don't want to seem selfish," said little Julius, who was his mother's spoiled darling, "only I *must* say just one thing: *Ethel* was in London last year, and she drove in cabs there. *I* never have such treats!"

But all this was left behind. Mother's headache and Julius's lamentations faded into oblivion, when they reached the Manor House, and found quite a large company gathered together, resplendent in summer attire. Then came the drive to Allerton, ten miles of pretty country, up hill and down dale, till the various vehicles drew up at last in front of the quaint old inn, which was built on the ruins of the monastery. In the interval before tea, the party amused themselves by going over the ancient church or walking about the inn garden.

"Can't you fancy the monks marching in and out of that arched doorway," said Sylvia, "with long gowns, and shaven heads, and ropes round their waists?"

"I prefer to imagine the inn people going about with trays of good things for our tea," observed Willie Daubeny.

"How matter-of-fact you are!" said Sylvia. "Don't you care at all for associations?"

"I don't think monks are particularly amusing associations to look back to," said Angela; "they must have led a dull life, don't you think?"

"*I* believe," said her brother, "they lived very comfortable lives, and enjoyed themselves uncommonly."

"I wonder how *you'd* like to get out of your warm bed two or three times every night in the dead of winter," said Sylvia, "and go downstairs into a cold church to sing psalms?"

"Yes, Willie," said Angela, "you, who call coming down to breakfast at eight getting up in the middle of the night!"

"Well, you're not so fond of early rising yourself that you need scoff at me. Where's the use of life if you can't have a little comfort in it? and the time after you're called in the morning is the pleasantest in the twenty-four hours."

"I'm not so surprised at people being lazy," said Sylvia, with severe emphasis. "What I can't understand is that anybody should glory in laziness, instead of being ashamed. I don't suppose I shall ever marry, but, if I do, I'm determined on one thing—I'll never marry anyone who spends his mornings in bed!"

"I do wish Sylvia wouldn't make speeches of that kind," said Ethel to herself. "She annoys people so needlessly; but I've given her advice enough in my time!"

The young man thus attacked replied with cousinly frankness—

"I don't envy your husband, Sylvia: he'll have a hard life, poor man!"

"You say that because you are thinking of people who make their own enjoyment the one object of life; that's not my ideal at all. I'd much rather die an old maid than marry a man of that stamp."

"And what *is* your ideal?" said Mr. Lowndes, putting up his eye-glass, as if he thought this emphatic young woman a curious object of contemplation.

Sylvia was a little afraid of Mr. Lowndes. Nevertheless, she answered, boldly—"He's a generous, high-minded man who doesn't think about himself at all, but lives for great ends, and is always caring for other people."

"That sounds very pretty, but I suppose your hero *prefers* to be generous and high-minded, doesn't he?"

"Of course he does," said Sylvia, not seeing Mr. Lowndes's drift.

"Then he's doing the thing *he* likes best, and the man you call selfish is doing the thing *he* likes best; so, when you look a little below the surface, you find they're both selfish alike—only they take their pleasure in different ways."

"Do you mean to say there is no such thing as unselfishness then?"

"Why there can't be such a thing—when you come to think of it. We can't help doing what, taking everything into account, we like best to do."

This was a puzzling way of putting the matter. It made Sylvia very angry, but, being unaccustomed to metaphysics, she saw no way of untying the knot. Lancelot came to her rescue. To him ideas of this kind were somewhat more familiar.

"After all," said he, "that's mere sophistry, and we all know it's sophistry, whatever we may pretend. You're playing with words that have two meanings, using the expression '*like best*,' first, to convey the idea of choice, and then to convey the idea of pleasure."

Sylvia gave him a radiant look of gratitude. It was pleasant to have a champion, and she added a little blow on her own account.

"So, I suppose, Mr. Lowndes, you like bad people as well as good?"

"Very often I like them a great deal better. These extremely worthy people are just a trifle monotonous. I'm inclined to class my fellow-creatures in two great divisions, the bad-interesting, and the good-dull."

"And which am I?" put in Miss Angela.

"Which would you prefer to be?"

"If I must choose, I'd rather be one of the bad-interesting, I'm afraid. That sounds rather shocking, doesn't it?"

"I'm sure I've known lots of very good *and* very interesting people," said Sylvia, indignantly.

"Name a few of them," said Willie Daubeny.

"Most of the people I mean are relations," said Sylvia, "and therefore I feel modest about bringing

them forward. Which class do I belong to, Mr. Lowndes?"

"I don't presume to decide."

"Which do *you* belong to?"

"I can't flatter myself that I'm one of the worthy ones of the world; I fear I may be an exception to my own rule—one of the dull-bad."

"I hate this kind of talk!" said Sylvia. "I don't want to hear any more of your opinions, Mr. Lowndes. I'd rather talk to Mr. Bassett; *he* won't rub me the wrong way."

And she turned towards Lancelot, who flushed at the little compliment.

"Should you like to see the monks' dairy, Mr. Bassett? It's a delightful old place, so cool and so quaint."

He turned towards the house with her, and they walked across the lawn in the direction of the antique doorway that led to the dairy.

"Why should anybody want to make out that right and wrong are both alike?" said Sylvia, still feeling ruffled.

"It's nothing but talk; people like to say startling things—that's all."

"But it makes me feel so unsatisfactory, as if I were losing all my bearings. We *ought* to admire good people, and dislike bad people."

"You remind me of a tale I once heard about a clergyman, or rather about a certain person in the clergyman's congregation. 'You've done me such a deal of good,' said this man to his clergyman; 'before you came here I used to fear neither God nor devil; and *now* I love them both!'"

Sylvia laughed.

"I'm glad Ethel didn't hear you tell that story; she'd say it was profane."

"What shall we do after tea? Can't we have a walk, and explore this beautiful valley? They say there's a delightful path through the woods—but perhaps you know it already?"

"No, I don't; I've only been here once, and then we didn't explore at all. We stayed in this garden all the evening, playing blindman's-buff and so on. I was dreadfully disappointed."

"It seems a waste to come ten miles, and then spend our time in playing games which we could do just as well at home, doesn't it?"

Sylvia agreed with him, and, when tea was over, Lancelot propounded his scheme for an expedition into the woods. Everybody agreed, when appealed to, that "a walk would be very pleasant"; but no one made a move; evidently the inn garden possessed superior attractions.

"How stupid they are!" said Sylvia. "I've no patience with such laziness! Nobody has a bit of spirit except you and me."

"Shall we go by ourselves," suggested Lancelot, "as no one seems inclined to come with us?"

"All right," returned Sylvia, readily enough, "I'm longing to find out where that path leads to."

They went forth accordingly, crossed the picturesque old bridge that spanned the brown river, and, ascending a short bit of steep road, found themselves in the oak woods, which fringed the banks for mile after mile on both sides of the stream. The bountiful June sunshine poured a checker-work of light on the sylvan path, while far beneath them—

> "The racing river leaped and sang
> Full blithely in the perfect weather."

"Oh, isn't it delicious here?" said Sylvia. "I do love to hear rushing water on a hot day. And the woods smell so sweet! I can just fancy myself in the Black Forest or somewhere ever so far away from Winston."

"Why do you want to be so far away? Don't you enjoy the present?"

"Oh, yes; you mustn't think I'm one of the discontented sort. I enjoy most things, I think, but people always want *something* more than they've got, don't they?"

"I suppose they do," said her companion, gravely. "And yet the present is so beautiful I almost wish it could last always, just as it is now."

They walked on without further speech. Sylvia began to think her friend had less to say than usual. She didn't want him to grow tired of her company; she must try to be more lively, and she racked her brains for topics of conversation, but all her little remarks seemed to fall flat. She glanced at Lancelot, and thought he looked plainer and more "hobbledehoyish" than ever.

"It wouldn't be so bad if he had a less romantic name," said she to herself, with a covert smile, "but, really, he is *too* unlike his poetical namesake, the mirror of knighthood."

At last they reached a spot where the trees stood closer together and the shadows fell more sombre. Here someone had set up a rustic bench for the accommodation of pilgrims, and they sat down to rest. Fifty feet below they heard, though they could not see, the rushing of the river over its rocky bed, between the walls of wood.

"What a beautiful place!" said Sylvia.

"Yes—beautiful!"

"Just the place for satyrs, and nymphs, and all mysterious creatures to play their pranks!"

"Yes; quite that kind of place."

Another pause.

An original idea at last knocked at the door of Miss Sylvia's mind.

"I have it!" thought she. "People always enjoy talking about themselves."

"Have you ever read Spenser—the 'Faërie Queene,' I mean?" she asked, aloud.

"Yes—a long time ago."

"Don't you remember the introduction?—how the Queen held her court, and knights assembled in search of adventures? On the first day a maiden appeared praying for succour, and so there started up a clownish young man, who made petition that the adventure might be assigned to him. That was the Red-cross Knight, you know, who killed the dragon."

"Yes; I remember that."

"And I've just been thinking, Mr. Bassett, that young man must have been exactly like you."

"Why like me, Miss Sylvia?"

It suddenly struck Sylvia that it would be a little difficult to explain Lancelot's resemblance to the clownish young man without hurting his feelings, but, as it was too late to withdraw her words, it only remained to put the best possible construction on them.

"He was a very young man, who had never borne arms, and was determined to do great things in the world, to fight for the right, and defend the oppressed. And he succeeded—as I've no doubt you'll succeed!"

"I've got more tact than people give me credit for," thought Sylvia, concluding her little speech with a bright smile at her companion. "Instead of vexing him by calling him a clown, I've paid him a pretty compliment, and not a false one, either, for, after all, that *was* part of what I meant at first."

Lancelot had, as Sylvia hoped, accepted her words as a compliment; and he had taken them to bear a much more serious significance than she intended. Though not by nature exceptionally conceited, he really believed now that she looked upon him as a hero, and was proportionately elated. He had been dwelling on the conversation in the inn garden, while Sylvia had been wondering at his silence—dwelling especially on her own emphatic declaration concerning the kind of man she would choose for a husband. Putting the two things together, he thought they boded good to him, for she would marry no man who was not something of a hero, and now she implied that she discerned a touch of the heroic in himself. He made no reply to her last speech; indeed, he could scarcely have summoned up self-possession to give a light answer, but he gazed at her so intently that she said to herself—

"I wonder what he can be thinking about; he looks so strange. I do hope I haven't offended him after all by that unlucky first remark of mine. If he really is vexed, we'd better have it out at once; I don't want to let the thing rankle, as such things do when they are covered up—for I've always liked Lancelot."

"Will you answer a question?" she said aloud. "It shall be the same game we played the other day in Mrs. Ayton's greenhouse."

"And then you'll let *me* ask a question and get a true answer in my turn?" said he, looking at her even more earnestly than before.

"Yes, of course. My question is: What were you thinking of just now?"

"Do you wish to know exactly what I was thinking the moment you spoke?"

"Yes, I do, Mr. Bassett. Exactly what you were thinking at that very moment. I have an extremely particular reason for wanting to know."

She glanced up with a friendly smile, and was startled to see the change that passed over his features. He seemed to be struggling with conflicting motives; it was as if he were making up his mind to some decisive resolution. Sylvia was not physiognomist enough to analyse the expression of his face so definitely as this; but she felt vaguely perplexed, if not a little frightened.

"It's plain I've offended him seriously," she thought. "I didn't think he was silly enough to take up a trifle in that way."

"Well?" she said, impatient to get the matter over.

"Then, Miss Sylvia, I was thinking how much I loved you, and wondering whether it was possible you could——" He paused; it seemed presumption to suggest that she could return his love—"wondering whether you would be angry if I told you so."

"I—I don't quite understand," stammered Sylvia, turning pale, and yet she could not help understanding, though it was her first experience of the kind.

Having made the fatal plunge, our hero recovered the use of his faculties. Love lent him eloquence to plead his cause, and he almost wondered at his own flow of words.

"Yes, I think you can't fail to understand me, Miss Sylvia. I love you with all my heart. I never loved anyone before—in this way, I mean—I love you with the kind of love a man only feels once in his lifetime, and, whether you ever care for me or not, I shall always go on loving you. I'm not foolish or conceited enough to imagine it possible you can feel towards me as I feel towards you. I wouldn't have told you this now, I would have kept it all in, and gone on doing my best to make you—like me, for a long time before I said anything—only, you see, I can't stay at Winston very long, and how could I go away and say nothing? And, besides, I thought perhaps if you knew I loved you so, dear, it would make you think of me, and perhaps—in time—perhaps, if I tried very hard to make myself what you would approve, you might get to care for me a little, because I feel as if my love for you was so great and so strong that it *must* in time compel you to care a little."

He looked at her with a question and an appeal in his eyes. She clasped her fingers nervously together, feeling altogether at a loss how to answer him, not from the smallest doubtfulness of her own wishes in the matter, but because she was so anxious to express herself in a way that would not pain him. His words had touched and moved her; they were of a kind so utterly strange and new to the girl, and they came so manifestly from his heart, that Sylvia's whole being went out to him in passionate pity. What should she say? How could she most quickly, yet most gently, make him understand that he was cherishing a hopeless love? No answer suggested itself; and still he looked at her, and waited.

"How pale she has turned!" thought he. "I wonder what that signifies? Oh! it's impossible she can be *quite* indifferent to me, when I love her so intensely!"

It was only by a great effort that Sylvia opened her lips at last, for it was necessary to frame some sort of reply, however lame. And, at that moment, as the idea of her, Sylvia, *marrying* this boy, whom she had tried to draw out and be kind to, because he was shy and knew nobody else—as this idea flashed across her, after that inconvenient fashion in which comedy does

sometimes intrude itself into the domain of tragedy, she could hardly repress a smile: the whole thing seemed so absurd. Happily she did repress it, and her amusement was swept away next moment by another rush of compassion.

"Oh, I'm so sorry—so truly sorry, you can't think—that you should have thought of me like this. I can't bear to make you unhappy, but I can't help it. You mustn't think I don't like you, for I do. You understand, don't you?"

She did not like to raise her eyes to look at him, and did not perceive the change of expression on his face, as he said, with sudden calmness—

"I think you mean to say that you don't love me."

"Oh, but I don't want you to feel hurt. You have no reason to feel hurt. I've always enjoyed talking to you very much, and, really and truly, I think a great deal of you—more than I do of any other young man." She only became aware of this fact at the moment of speaking, but it was quite true, and she repeated it, with even greater emphasis. "Yes, Mr. Bassett, I feel sure you'll be a great man some day, a famous statesman, and I shall be very interested in seeing your name in the papers. 'It is rumoured the Queen has sent for Mr. Bassett, and entrusted him with the task of forming a Government'—that's the way they put it, I think—just imagine that!"

"Oh, Miss Sylvia, please don't go on like this. I can't bear it."

"Oh, but I like to think of it. When I read that paragraph I shall say, 'What do you think? I knew Mr. Bassett a long time ago, and prophesied that he would do great things.'"

"If you really think well of me, won't you take time to consider whether you couldn't——" Lancelot hesitated.

"Oh, but I don't need any time to consider. I'm afraid I haven't made you understand me after all. I can't possibly feel anything of that sort. I never had a shadow of any such feeling in my life for anybody. You must really put these ideas quite out of your head."

"But you say you like to talk to me, and that you don't despise me—and that you never liked anyone else—so there must surely be a *chance* for me at least. I can't help going on hoping. You won't forbid me to do that?"

Sylvia grew a little impatient.

"What *is* the use of trying to prove that I care for you, when I've told you several times that I don't? It's not that I don't *wish* to—I mean to say it's not that I want *not* to—but I can't. So, you see, it's not the least bit of good to try to persuade me. Please let's say no more about it."

There was a certain dignity in the tone of Lancelot's answer:

"I won't go on troubling you then, Miss Sylvia; but you must allow me to say just one thing more. My love's not the sort that grows cold, because it's not returned; it's the kind of love that makes me long to do all I can for you. If there's anything you want—anything that I can possibly do to please you, now or at any other time, either in the way of money or in any way" (he grew hot as he said this, for he would not have her think he prided himself on his wealth)—"I want you to promise to ask me. It will be the greatest happiness I can have, if you will ever let me help you somehow, or anyone you care for. You were talking one day of what you would like to get for yourself and your friends if you were rich. I do wish you would let me do some of those things—all those things—I remember every one of them, Miss Sylvia——"

Sylvia interrupted him:

"You are very good, Mr. Bassett, far too good, indeed, but it would be shameful to take advantage of your kindness. You'll understand that, I know. Now, shall we walk back towards the inn? Ethel and all of them will be wondering what has become of us."

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

"ELLE NE M'AIME PAS, ELLE M'AIME UN PEU."

Sylvia's head was full of this wonderful thing that had befallen her, when she went upstairs to her mother next morning. She had made a great step in her own estimation; it seemed incredible, yet it was really true, that someone had actually fallen in love with the obscure Miss Hornby, though that somebody was only "poor Lancelot Bassett." Of course, it would be shabby and mean to tell people that he had offered to marry her and been refused; but she could not help wishing it might become known without her telling it. Then Angela, and Willie, and that stuck-up Mr. Lowndes, and all the rest of them, would perceive that she had had power to inspire a grand passion.

So it was with the sense of nursing an important secret that Sylvia sought her mother's room, with the breakfast-tray daintily spread. Her mother's face startled her: it looked so pale, so drawn, so marked with lines of pain, that she felt a great pang of remorse, and reproached herself with her own selfishness; she had quite forgotten mother's headache. Mother had been lying there, suffering, all the time she and Ethel had been pleasure-seeking; mother had been in pain all through the night, which *she* had passed in thoughts and dreams of her own triumph. She set down the tray, and hurried to Mrs. Hornby's side.

"You don't look well, mother. Your head's worse; oh! what can I do for you? May I get you some eau-de-Cologne, or fetch some cold water to sponge your forehead? You can't take this coffee, I'm sure: I'll get you some nice hot tea, and a tiny bit of dry toast."

"No, Sylvia; never mind the breakfast," said Mrs. Hornby. "I've something very serious to tell you. Ask Ethel to come up."

Sylvia obeyed, full of wondering curiosity; and then Mrs. Hornby revealed to both girls the circumstances which the reader knows already. It was some time before Sylvia, who had little knowledge of money matters, could grasp the situation, but it became clear

to her at last. She had often talked about being poor; but the poverty that must now be faced was a new thing. It no longer meant wearing a shabby hat, and having your last year's gown dyed, when cousin Angela had two new ones. It meant difficulty in finding food and clothing for the family; it meant no money to pay servants' wages; it meant that she must go out as a governess, while Ethel did a servant's work; but those things were not the worst part of it; it made it impossible for Mrs. Hornby to comply with the doctor's orders, and go abroad for the winter. Perhaps, then, it meant that mother would die! Oh! that would be too dreadful! It could not be! Yet had not Dr. Martin said that his patient would run a very serious risk if she remained in England? Yes, it meant *that*, and Sylvia repeated to herself over and over again, "Mother will die!"—as if she wanted to force herself to realise the true state of the case.

"Oh, Ethel!" she said to her sister, when, at last, by Mrs. Hornby's desire, they were going downstairs again, "what is to be done? What can you and I do? We *must* find some way of making money!"

"I suppose you may be able to earn your living as a governess, and perhaps, if you're very scrimpy on yourself, to spare a few pounds towards our housekeeping. We must go into the smallest cottage that will hold us. Letty and I must be the maids, and teach the little ones."

"But, Ethel, Ethel dear, stop; don't open the door just yet—listen to me: I must speak. Don't you remember what Dr. Martin said not so long ago—that it was as much as mother's life was worth to spend this next winter in England?"

"Yes, Sylvia, but she'll have to run the risk: there's no alternative. We must just try to keep her as warm as we can."

"But there *must* be an alternative," cried Sylvia, fiercely; "we can't let her die. We *must* find some way."

"I see no possible way."

"You or I must write a book, or make an invention, or borrow some money."

"What's the use of talking nonsense, child?" said Ethel, sharply; "things are bad enough without that. Use your common sense; you know perfectly well there's no chance of doing anything of the kind."

"There *must* be some way," repeated Sylvia.

"The only way I can imagine is to go about begging of our relations, and mother's so proud that *that* would kill her sooner than the cold weather."

"She need never know where the money came from," suggested Sylvia.

"Don't be absurd! You know mother better than that. No, all we can do is to try to make the best of things. If you want to help mother, just keep the children quiet; don't tell them anything yet, or you'll set them asking all kinds of tiresome questions. Shut them up in the school-room, and give them their lessons as usual, while mother and I try to fix about the house and servants, and so on."

As if to stop further discussion, Ethel opened the dining-room door, putting aside the children's eager questions by a rigid policy of non-committal; but little people have sharp eyes and ears.

"What's the matter with Sylvia?" cried Arthur suddenly; "she's done her breakfast, and she's only had one small piece of bread and butter. Are you ill, Sylvia?"

"No, not a bit."

"Then I know what it is," said Julius; "she must be in love. People never eat when they're in love, Mary Jane says."

"Don't be silly, Julius. Just let me alone. I'm not hungry, that's all."

"People never tell anybody when they're in love, do they?"

"I don't know. I never tried it, and I'm never likely to," said Sylvia, shortly; but her cheeks suddenly grew hot, as she recalled the scene of yesterday.

"Look at Sylvia, all of you," cried the *enfant terrible*; "a turkey-cock's nowhere to her!"

Naturally Sylvia's blushes became deeper. She turned on Julius.

"Don't you know it's rude to make personal remarks, Julius? And very vulgar to make jokes about people being in love, and all that nonsense?"

"Why are you so red, then?"

"Because I'm vexed to hear you going on so stupidly."

"No—no, you can't take us in!" said Arthur. "We know better than that. Now, who can it be?" added this plain-spoken brother, turning round to the assembled company.

"Mr. Lowndes, perhaps," suggested Letty.

"Mr. Lowndes, indeed!" ejaculated Julius, with some scorn at Letty's lack of penetration. "I heard Mary Jane say Mr. Lowndes was 'paying his addresses' —those were the very words—to Angela."

"Ah! but *I* heard someone say Mr. Bassett paid great attention to our Sylvia," said Arthur; "so it must be Mr. Bassett, if it's anybody?"

"Mr. Bassett!" cried Letty. "*That* farmer's boy! Well! if Sylvia ever does marry (I don't think she ever will, mind), I hope she'll give us rather a different brother-in-law."

"You might go further and fare worse," said Sylvia, who now, to her exceeding relief, became conscious that her cheeks were returning to their normal temperature. "And, when I purpose getting married, I'll let you know. Now, children, come straight to the school-room; we're going to begin lessons half an hour earlier this morning."

There was a loud and bitter outcry from the whole party, who always counted on at least half an hour's grace between breakfast and lessons, which fraças probably ruffled the temper of teacher and pupils alike, for the next two hours passed by no means smoothly. School was over at last, the children vanished into the garden, and Sylvia, going upstairs to her mother's room, met Ethel, who warned her away, as Mrs. Hornby was trying to take a nap—requesting her at the same time to go over to Fieldhead Farm, and tell the farmer's wife Mrs. Hornby

wished to reduce her supply of milk, butter, and eggs. Sylvia was not sorry to have an excuse for a walk; she wanted to be alone, to have time for thinking and planning.

So she got her hat, and set out immediately. The shortest way to Fieldhead was a path across the meadows just above the Manor House. As soon as the road was fairly out of sight, she sat down at the corner of a fir plantation, and allowed herself the luxury of tears. Faster and faster they flowed, as she pictured to herself the decline of her mother's health through the coming winter. When she got as far as the deathbed scene, she sobbed aloud, and threw herself all along upon the grass in an agony.

Now Lancelot Bassett chanced to be wandering about his aunt's domains, like a disconsolate lover as he was, repenting his precipitation of yesterday, and, catching sight of the prostrate figure, he recognised it from a great distance with the intuitive perception of love. What could this mean? was she ill? had she fallen down and sprained an ankle? It would be nothing but common propriety to go and see. Absorbed in her imaginations, Sylvia never heard the step on the grass, never guessed that anyone was near; she went on sobbing in a childish abandonment of grief. Lancelot stood irresolute; she was in trouble, that was evident, and perhaps it would be intrusive to force himself upon her; yet how could he bear to leave her thus? Perhaps he might be able to help her, and he should so dearly love to help her.

"WITH THE SENSE OF NURSING AN IMPORTANT SECRET SYLVIA SOUGHT HER MOTHER'S ROOM" (*p.* 94).

Summoning up all his resolution, and silencing his scruples, he approached a few steps nearer, and called her by name. Sylvia sprang to her feet, dashing away her tears, and trying to speak as usual.

"It's a beautiful day, isn't it? I'm on my way to Fieldhead, and just sat down by the wayside to rest."

The young man hesitated for a moment.

"Miss Sylvia," he said at last, "I hope you won't mind, but I couldn't help seeing that you were in trouble, and I thought I should like—I hoped—perhaps I could do something for you?"

He gave her an appealing glance, as much as to say, "Do let me know what is the matter;" and, as Sylvia looked into his anxious face, she felt an impulse to "tell him all about it," as the children say. It would be such a comfort to talk to someone who, she was sure, would sympathise, who would not set her down, as Ethel had done. It was true they had parted under rather awkward circumstances, but the fact that, in Sylvia's mind, there was so little "sentiment" connected with Lancelot made it easier to confide her sorrows to the rejected lover.

"Oh, Mr. Bassett, I'm very, very miserable; I'm in great trouble: we're all in terrible trouble, and I don't know what to do."

"Mayn't I know what the trouble is, Miss Sylvia? Surely I could be of some use?"

"No, I'm afraid you couldn't. But I'll tell you what's the matter." She paused. "I suppose Ethel would say we ought to keep our misfortunes to ourselves as long as we can; but what's the good? People must know it all very soon. Mr. Bassett, mother's lost nearly all her money, and so we're awfully poor now. We called ourselves poor before, but it's real poverty this time; and the worst of it is, the doctors say it's hardly possible for mother to live another winter in England, and now, of course, she can't afford to go abroad."

Sylvia's voice trembled, and she had almost broken down.

"I shouldn't mind being poor a bit—not *really* mind; that is, I should mind nothing if it weren't for that. And oh! I've been thinking, and thinking, and racking my brains to find some way to help, and I can't; it's no use. I feel like someone shut in by high walls on every side, with no possible way out—no chance of making any money. No, I feel as if I were in one of those wretched dreams where you struggle for hours together to dress to get ready for a journey or something, and you never *can* get ready. You must know that sort of dream."

It was with mingled feelings that Lancelot listened to this rapid outpouring—pity and sympathy, but also an undefined hope that Sylvia's family troubles might give him a new opportunity of pleading his suit.

"Miss Sylvia," he said, eagerly, "you remember what I said yesterday—how it would be my greatest pleasure if at any time I could be of use to you? And now the time has come, sooner than I expected. You must allow me to help you."

"It's no use thinking of helping mother with money," said Sylvia, going straight to the point, without any beating about the bush. "If that's what you mean, it's awfully kind and good of you, but it would be utterly useless to propose such a thing. Mother would never consent."

She spoke with great decision.

"Mrs. Hornby need never know where the money came from," suggested Lancelot, in the very same words Sylvia herself had used to Ethel.

"You don't know much about mother. I think I can imagine mother spending money that came from some generous unknown friend!"

"Let us try to find some way out of the difficulty. There must be some means of managing it, if we could only hit upon the right one."

He was thinking that Mrs. Hornby could not refuse to accept a gift from a son-in-law.

"I'm afraid it's impossible," said Sylvia, shaking her head, and moving on along the field path, while Lancelot, in silent perplexity, walked by her side. He could hardly ask Sylvia to marry him in order to enable him to help her mother.

While he was pondering this dilemma, a similar idea flashed, for the first time, through the girl's mind. Her heart almost stopped. She could save her mother's life, then, but only by sacrificing her own! So she looked at the matter, and there are moments when the soul joyfully accepts martyrdom without counting the cost. It was so with Sylvia now.

She would gladly have died for her mother, and, when it was a question of giving up, not life itself, but her own happiness in life, she could not hesitate for a moment. How often had she not read of people dying for friends, for lovers, for country! Her chance was come—the one great chance of glorious self-sacrifice, which might come only once in a lifetime—and she would not flinch. She must leave herself no time to consider; she must throw herself into the fiery gulf at once.

So she turned towards Lancelot. He was not looking at her; he seemed engrossed in his own thoughts. That made it harder to begin. She could not break in upon his abstraction by asking point blank whether he still wished to marry her, and yet she dared not give herself leisure to reflect, and perhaps to shrink from the precipice. And how absurd it was to hesitate about singeing your clothes, when you were going into the furnace! With one great convulsive shudder she began—

"Mr. Bassett——"

He turned round to her with a start, struck by an unnatural accent in her voice.

"Mr. Bassett, I've been thinking about what you said to me yesterday——"

He turned pale, but she did not notice it. What mattered anything now? What she had to do was simply to say the thing that must be said in the shortest, most straightforward way.

"When you said you loved me. I've changed my mind, and, if you still wish to marry me, I will marry you, and then—*then* you can help mother."

Sylvia had no thought of deceiving Lancelot. In fact, she had not paused to reflect in what light he

would regard this declaration—whether or no he would take it as implying that she loved him. Men are always prone to believe what they wish, and Lancelot took her words to mean not merely what was the truth—that she was willing to marry him for her mother's sake—but that she had been mistaken when she declared she could never love him. Sylvia had not stopped to make her little speech ; she had even quickened her pace. He now stepped in front of her, and looked into her face. He could not read the strange, set expression written there, and, indeed, his joyful revulsion of feeling was so strong and overwhelming that the look in Sylvia's eyes never struck him as of evil omen.

"Do you really mean it, Sylvia? Can you really care a little bit for me after all? And ever since yesterday I have been so angry with myself for my hastiness and presumption! I'm not worthy of your love, I know, but I'll make myself worthy. I'll do great things. I do believe, if you can love me, it will give me power to be the kind of man you admire—to be a hero; for I do *love* you, dear, with all my heart and strength."

The intense emphasis Lancelot put into the word *love* frightened poor Sylvia, so far as she was still capable of fear. She made no answer ; she could not understand the way in which her very cold declaration had been accepted. He continued—

"Oh, I've sometimes thought my great love must force you to care for me, and then I thought again I was a fool to suppose such a thing. And now it's come true!"

The die had been cast. Sylvia did not repent ; she had no idea of turning back from the road she had chosen, yet she shrank, with a painful shrinking, from the passionate words and looks of her lover.

"Oh, Mr. Bassett, I'm afraid I've made you suppose—I'm afraid you don't understand exactly what I meant."

"Didn't you say," he stammered, "I thought you said—that you had changed your mind—that you were willing to be my wife."

"Yes, I said so, but I didn't mean to say that I had changed—in *that* way. Don't you understand? That's not possible—but I'll try to please you every way I can. I will, indeed. And, of course, if that doesn't content you—I don't want you to marry me if you had rather not. You understand now, don't you?"

Lancelot did not understand. He set down her confused disclaimer to maidenly shyness.

"Oh, how can you speak so?" he said, hotly, "it's the one thing in the world I desire. I wish you could look into my heart, and see the great passion of love that is in it for you. I wish you could see all the joy and happiness you have given me. I never knew before how happy it was possible for a man to be."

He looked again into her eyes, and her eyes fell before his. She thought she had explained as much as she was bound to explain, and she could not endure to stand still, and have this man gazing at her like that.

"Please Mr. Bassett," said she, desperately, "I really can't stop here any longer. I was sent on an errand, and I've delayed too long already."

They walked on, and great was Sylvia's relief when they reached the stile leading into the main road, for a sudden horror had seized her lest Lancelot should desire to kiss her, and on that road she felt safe, for it was no lonely country lane, but the channel of a good deal of traffic. She made an effort to converse on general subjects, with a vague feeling that it was not fair to accept everything from him, without at least giving in return what little she was able. He had seemed, in former days, to like to hear her talk ; so she ventured a few remarks on the unusual earliness of the season, the advanced state of the foliage, and the farming at Fieldhead, but she was conscious that her observations fell very flat, for, under the circumstances, Lancelot naturally felt little disposed for impersonal conversation.

Sylvia found an excuse to avoid returning, as she had come, through the fields. When they approached Elderwood, she held out her hand to say good-bye.

"When may I see you again?" said Lancelot. "Mayn't I come this afternoon, and speak to your mother?"

"I think the evening will be better."

So they parted, and the young man walked back to the Manor. Suddenly, most unexpectedly, the desire of his heart had descended on him, as it were, from heaven. He had by no means understood Sylvia's confused explanation of her own attitude and feelings; and, though he had a sense, which he shrank from defining even to himself, that she was cold and unresponsive, yet he reasoned that, probably, it was common for girls to be thus ; the novelty of her situation, the fact that it was herself, not he, who had made the advances on this occasion, would naturally make her bashful. He must have patience, he must be content to wait, till the heat and intensity of his own love waked an answering glow in Sylvia's heart. Sooner or later it would be so, and he was not going to allow himself to be discouraged ; the event of this day had been so far beyond his hopes that he was surely entitled to draw from it the fairest auguries for the future.

And what were Sylvia's sensations, when rid of her lover's embarrassing presence, and safe in her own little chintz-curtained room? During the last three-quarters of an hour, she had strenuously resisted the temptation to think.

"But *now* I must sit down, and take a calm survey of things," she said to herself.

It was easy to talk of calmness, not so easy to practise it, when her whole being was in commotion, when she had just thrown her young life into the melting-pot to be recast in a new shape—a shape she would never have chosen, a shape she recoiled from, whenever she allowed herself to dwell on its details, with a very agony of shrinking. Her only endurable course was to shut out all forecastings—to live from hour to hour, from day to day ; for she had put her hand to the plough, and her mother's life was worth the price she was paying for it. That thought was Sylvia's sheet-anchor. She had no inclination to cry, which was

convenient. This pain was not of the soft, pathetic kind that finds itself tears; it was a pain which necessarily tends to harden a woman's nature, which forces her to harden herself in order to endure, to go through all that has to be gone through. And the first step must be the announcement of her engagement to Mrs. Hornby. Though not gifted with much subtlety, she had tact enough to see that the pecuniary advantages of the match must, for the present, be left in shadow.

"If mother gets the least inkling of the real state of the case," thought the poor girl, "of course she'll make me break off the engagement. She must never suspect it; but I can't tell untruths. I mustn't let her question me. I must look so bright and happy that mother shall never have room for a doubt about my wishes. That will be an unspoken lie, I suppose—which some people say is worse than the straightforward kind—I don't know; anyhow, I haven't quite the same feeling about it myself. So I'm going to be as merry as ever I can be: it's so immensely easier to feign high spirits than moderate ones when you're wishing you were dead all the time. And I'll go down to mother directly: when one has to have a tooth drawn, it's better not to sit and think about it."

Mrs. Hornby was by this time in the drawing-room, though looking so pale and ill that Ethel declared she ought to be in bed. She was writing, or, at least, her writing materials were spread out before her, but apparently she did not find her letter an easy task, for one elbow rested on the table, while the right hand grasped an idle pen.

"Mother," said Sylvia, going straight up to her, and taking a low stool by her side, "I've something to tell you—something *very astonishing*—which I hope you won't dislike. Mr. Bassett has asked me to marry him, and I said I would."

"My dear child! I had no idea of this! You're too young, dear, to think of such things yet; and this Mr. Bassett, he's hardly more than a boy, is he? and you've seen very little of him!"

"Why, mother," said Sylvia, in the most jaunty tone she could assume, "I'm nineteen! quite grown-up! And I should think Mr. Bassett's twenty-three or four. I think you'll like him. I *do* hope you will!"

"But, Sylvia, dear, are you sure you care for him? You've known him such a short time, and I've heard you make fun of him! When did this happen, dear?"

"Yesterday evening at the picnic," said Sylvia, conveniently ignoring the previous question. "I didn't like to say anything about it this morning. I've sometimes made fun of him, I know, but it wasn't because I didn't like him. I *always* liked him from the first, and I really believe you will."

"But I must see him, dear, before we settle anything definitely; and I must have a talk with Mrs. Anderson, and make some inquiries about him: I feel so utterly in the dark."

"Yes, mother," said Sylvia, conscious that she had played her hypocrite's part well, and that Mrs. Hornby suspected nothing, "I believe he intends to call on you this evening. And now," added she, making herself as tall as she could, "now you'll have to respect me very much, and not call me a child any longer."

"Mothers don't like to find their children growing big enough to leave the nest," said Mrs. Hornby, with a sigh, "but I hope, dear, with all my heart, this may be for your happiness; and, coming just now, it is pleasant to think that *you* at least will be spared the trials of poverty. I'm afraid I should have been obliged to part with you, darling, in any case; for if this had not happened, you must have gone out into the cold world to make your own living; and now, I hope, that need never be, and my Sylvia may go to a happy home instead!"

And she held out her arms to embrace her daughter. Sylvia felt the tears on her mother's cheek, but they were not tears of pain, she knew; and she rejoiced in the thought that she was already reaping the fruits of her self-sacrifice. For a moment she was sorely tempted to enter on a description of all the delightful things she should now be able to do for mother, and brothers, and sisters, but she had firmly resolved not to broach that subject for the present, and she had self-control sufficient to keep her resolution. She could not refrain, however, from a little malicious delight in the fact that it was she—the careless, unpractical Sylvia, and not the wise, sensible Ethel, who always assumed that *she* was mother's right hand—that had wrought this great redemption for the family. Ethel had scouted all her suggestions this morning as absurd; Ethel had dismissed her to keep the children quiet, whilst she herself talked over the family affairs with mother; well, the tables were going to be turned now!

The dinner-bell sounded, and, towards the close of that meal, Sylvia, who was anxious to "get the thing over" as promptly as possible, chose a moment when there was a comparative lull in the conversation to make her important announcement.

"Ethel, and all you children, I don't know what you'll think when I tell you I'm going to be married. You needn't look like that, Letty. I am, really; I'm not making fun. I'm going to marry Lancelot Bassett."

The surprising tidings took away their breath.

"Oh, Sylvia!" said Ethel, in a tone which spoke unutterable things.

"Lancelot!" cried Julius. "Oh, what fun! Just what Arthur was saying this morning! We were right you see, and Letty was wrong. And so Sylvia *was* in love all the time. I shall tell Lancelot when I see him. I suppose he'll come here every evening now, like Mary Ann's young man."

Sylvia was on the point of uttering a dire threat of the consequences which would follow indiscreet revelations, when it struck her that Julius's idea was a convenient one for her, and would confirm everybody in the belief that her marriage was one of inclination. She remained silent, therefore, while a storm of eager interrogations pelted down upon her head.

"When is *it* to be, Sylvia?"

"Shall I be bridesmaid?"

"I suppose you'll have us all to stay with you, when you have a house of your own?"

"Where are you going to live, Sylvia?"

"Hurrah! we'll have no lessons!"

"Just fancy Sylvia turned into Mrs. Lancelot Bassett! My word! What a fine name!"

Sylvia's temper was beginning to give way.

"Arthur, just be quiet, will you? And '*my word!*' is a very vulgar expression; if I've told you that once, I've told you a hundred times."

"You're not going to be governess any longer, Mrs. Lancelot Bassett! so we can say *my word!* and *oh my!* as often as we like. I always thought you'd be an old maid, though, Sylvia. I never thought anyone would want to marry you—you're not pretty enough. Perhaps it won't ever come off, after all?"

"Hush, Arthur! don't talk like that," said Mrs. Hornby, rising from the table, and thus enabling Sylvia to effect a retreat.

That evening Sylvia bestowed a very unusual degree of attention on her toilet. If she did not love poor Lancelot, the least she could do was to pay him proper respect and courtesy. She brushed the unruly hair; she put on her best slippers and white gown, pinned two red roses beneath her brooch, and sat down demurely beside her mother's couch in the drawing-room, with a half-embroidered tea-cloth begun a year ago—her "company work." When the familiar sound of the front-door bell made itself heard, she neither coloured nor felt conscious; to her there was no flavour of romance about the occasion. She looked at Lancelot as the maid ushered him in. Yes, there was no doubt about it; he did look awkward and bucolic; one notices trifles strangely at such times, and, all the time her *fiancé* was talking to Mrs. Hornby, she could not help watching his wrists, which looked very red above a pair of tight gloves. But what mattered red wrists or anything else? Had she not made up her mind irrevocably? She would do wisely to dwell on such merits as her future husband possessed. She was sure he had a kind heart; he appeared to admire her "obscure" self in a most incomprehensible fashion. Perhaps life with him might, in the course of years, become at least endurable. Or she might die very soon; there were so many possibilities.

When the more formal part of the visit was over, the lover asked his betrothed to come out into the garden.

Sylvia rose obediently, folded up her work with unusual care, put on her hat, and accompanied Lancelot through the French window on to the lawn. The dew was falling, trees and grass alike breathed the delicious freshness of an evening in early summer. Among the fruit-bushes birds were chirping and singing; the corn-crake was calling in the meadows over the road; all nature seemed to Lancelot to radiate an atmosphere of poetry.

But poor Sylvia was thinking how different was this blank reality from the girlish dreams of love and courtship that had sometimes flitted before her mind's eye. Her heart sank under an overpowering sense of dreariness when she found herself alone with the man she had just been persuading herself to tolerate. It was half-past eight, happily; there could not be *very* much time to fill up. But then came the thought, How about the slow hours and days and years that lay between this evening and the end of life? She was so young, she said to herself, with an emotion of self-pity. Well, she must try to avert her eyes from the desert of the future.

"It's a lovely evening, isn't it?" she said.

"Most beautiful. Do you remember that afternoon when we pulled gooseberries among those bushes, and you scolded me for being lazy? Shall I tell you what made me so slow? It was looking at you and listening to you, Sylvia, so you'll have to forgive me, and try me once more. When may I come back and redeem my character?"

"I don't know," said Sylvia; "I think we've done preserving for the present."

"That day seems a long time ago, now, doesn't it?"

"Yes. It was Tuesday, I think."

"Only last Tuesday, and I feel as if I had lived a whole life between then and now. Ever since that day, I've been wondering whether it was any use to ask for your love, dear; sometimes I hoped, more often I despaired, but I made up my mind, you see, to lose nothing for want of asking."

"He insists on assuming I'm in love with him," said Sylvia, half-vexed, half-amused; "but he knows the truth, and if he chooses to take that tone—it pleases him, I suppose, and doesn't hurt me!"

So Lancelot talked, and Sylvia listened, putting in a commonplace sentence now and then. They sat down at last on a garden bench. The ubiquitous Julius came up.

"May I call you Lancelot?" he asked, with an innocent air.

"Certainly," said that hero, smiling.

"Then, Lancelot, I want to tell you something. This morning I hadn't the smallest idea about you and Sylvia, you know, and Sylvia couldn't eat her breakfast——"

"Hush, Julius, go away!" cried Sylvia, hastily.

"—So I said, 'Sylvia must be in love; who can it be?' and she turned fiery red—and then we guessed it was you—yes, we did—and we were right!"

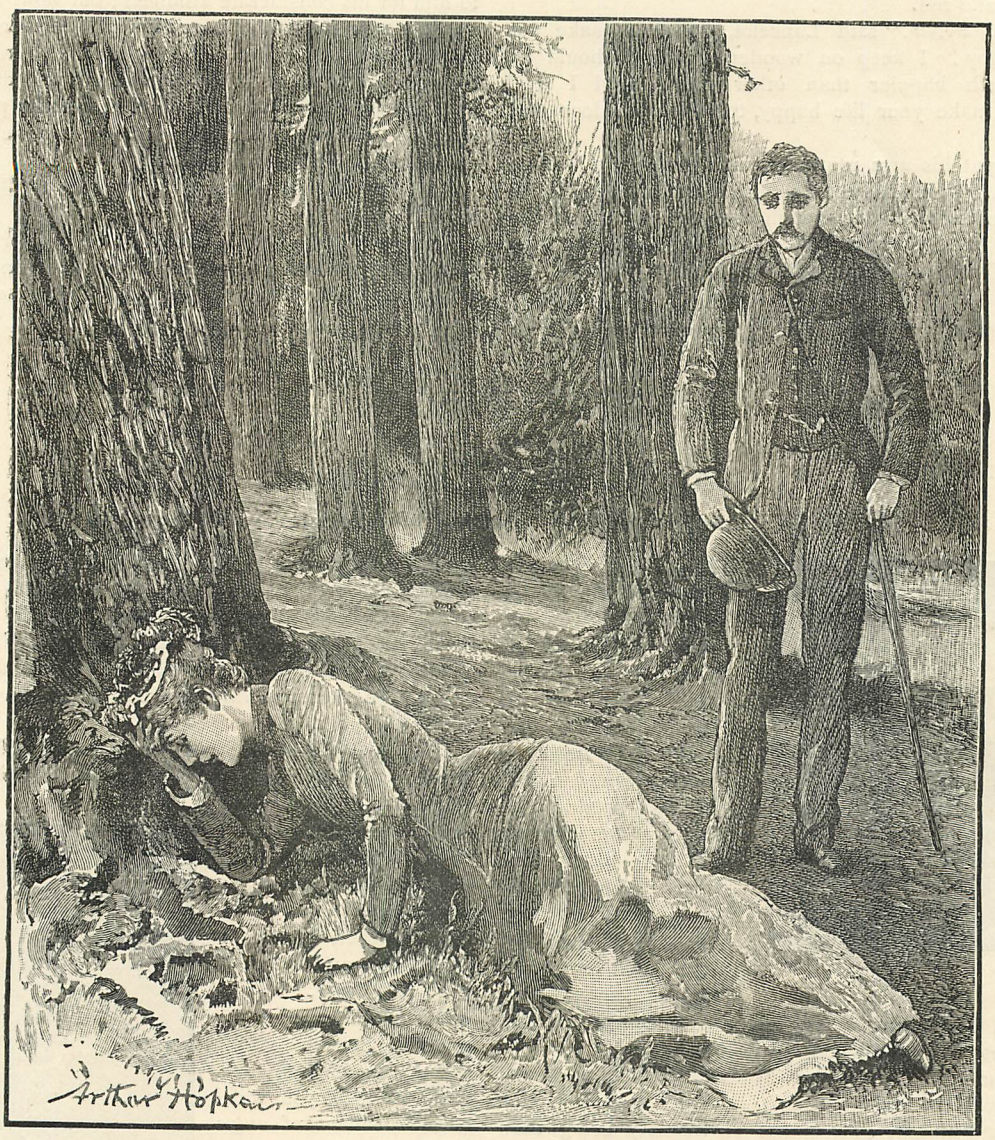
Whereupon Julius fled, fearing vengeance. Sylvia looked uncomfortable.

"You mustn't mind Julius's nonsense," she said, with an effort; "he's the spoiled child of the family."

"It pleases *me* very much, dear," said Lancelot, gently, "only I'm sorry if it has annoyed you. We'll talk of something else. Here am I, so selfish, I'm afraid, over my own happiness that I've hardly given you any sympathy; but now I want you to tell me all you can about those troubles, that I may find out the best way of helping you."

Sylvia was touched.

"You are very good. Well, the state of affairs is



"LANCELOT STOOD IRRESOLUTE" (*p.* 96).

this——" And she entered with some minuteness into details. Lancelot listened attentively.

"I'm afraid nothing can be done to mend matters," he said at last, "except that I shall count it my greatest happiness—no, not greatest happiness, but *one* great pleasure—to help your mother. I never was so glad before to have been born with plenty of money. Till now it never seemed to do me much good. You must set your wits to work to find out which way of doing the thing will be pleasantest to your mother—*my* mother she will soon be, Sylvia!"

"I hardly know; she's so proud; but, of course, when——" She hesitated, and then went on, desperately —"when we're married,—I suppose she'll feel differently."

"Of course, she will," said the lover, eagerly; "so, don't you think, dear—I don't want to hurry you or press you, you know—but don't you think we had better be married as soon as possible?"

He looked at her inquiringly. Her eyes were fixed on the hands which she was nervously clasping and unclasping on her lap. It would have changed the course of two lives, if he could have read her thought, for she was recalling her favourite maxim about the drawing of teeth.

"I suppose it would be the wisest way," she said in a low voice, without looking up.

There were no hiding-places in the Elderwood garden, but "ambrosial night" was beginning to gather round them. The garden smelled summer-

sweet; behind the hills the June moon was rising round and red.

"Oh, Sylvia," said Lancelot, "you do make me so happy! I keep on wondering why I should be so much happier than other men! And I *will* try to make your life happy, too, for I do love you so."

He put his arm round her, and bent down his face to hers. In his passionate delight, he did not perceive the shudder that ran through poor Sylvia; if only she could have shrunk down into the earth, or torn herself from his embrace, and run away! But that was impossible; she *must* play her part; she must force herself to endure. Till this moment, she had at least liked Lancelot; she had just been feeling very grateful to him for his considerate kindness; but now, all of a sudden, something like a passion of abhorrence and hatred swept over her. She clenched her hands together, till the finger-nails almost ran into the flesh, as if she were schooling herself to bear sharp physical pain. At last she could bear it no longer; she sprang up, and said, with a sort of a gasp—

"Mother will be wanting me, I'm sure. We must go in."

The poor girl blamed herself afterwards for having told a lie, but in the extremity of her humiliation and horror she really did not know what she was saying.

END OF CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

MOUNT MELLICK EMBROIDERY.

BY JOSEPHA CRANE, AUTHOR OF "POCKET-HANDKERCHIEF WORK," ETC., ETC.

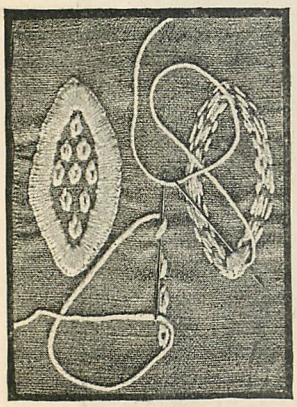


FIG. 1.

AN Irish locality, where the work originated, gives its name to this beautiful embroidery. In the neighbourhood of Mount Mellick the Industrial Association makes a *specialité* of this work, and thereby are enabled to help many distressed Irish ladies and others. It may be remembered by some that in 1885 this association presented a beautifully embroidered toilet-cover to the Princess of Wales when she visited Ireland.

Some people do the Mount Mellick work on coloured materials, but this is really incorrect, the distinguishing feature of the embroidery being that it is white worked upon a white foundation. A thick material should always be selected, for the work is heavy, and requires a substantial foundation. White satin jean is often used, so also is linen, plain or twilled, and the objects decorated with this work are tea and sideboard cloths, toilet-covers, night-dress sachets, bed-spreads, and a variety of other articles in kind, the great charm being that it washes again and again, and still preserves its beauty. Thick "between" needles are used to work with, but a special needle, called Bartleet's Superior Mount Mellick needle, is the most satisfactory of any, the eye being well adapted to holding the cotton, which is Strutt's knitting cotton, the sizes varying from six to fourteen in number.

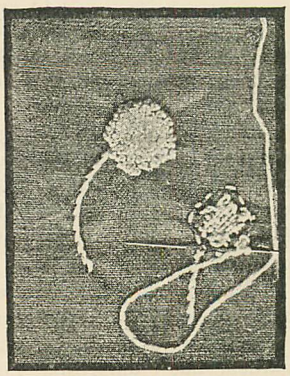


FIG. 2.

In choosing a design, you must bear in mind that the work is bold and striking rather than fine and delicate in detail, and a design where the leaves cross each other and branches interlace, or in which there is any crowding whatever, is most unsuitable, and the result very ugly. You will sometimes find a transfer pattern very useful, but if you can draw yourself you will be independent of any of these. Among the various flowers, etc., which are particularly well suited for this work are mountain-ash berries, acorns, blackberry flowers and leaves, passion flowers, conventional pomegranates, wheat, barley, grapes, lilies, hops, etc.

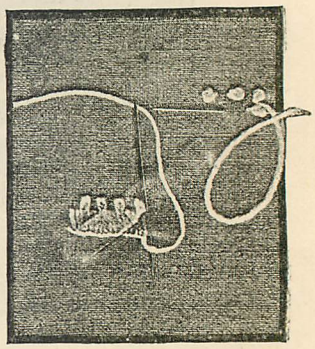


FIG. 3.

If you do not draw, and yet are in possession of a good design, you must put it on the material you are going to work. One way is to use carbonated paper, which can be obtained at any shop for drawing materials. Another is to prick the pattern all over, and then lay it upon the material, and secure it by drawing-pins, so that it may not slip. You next make some pounce, which is nothing else but finely-powdered and dry pipeclay and charcoal. Then you take a strip of flannel, about four or five inches wide, and roll it up tightly until you have a roll about the diameter

of a halfpenny; cut the edge quite clear and even, and then dipping the end into the pounce, you apply it to the pricked surface, rubbing it in well. After this is done, lift off the pattern, and you will find

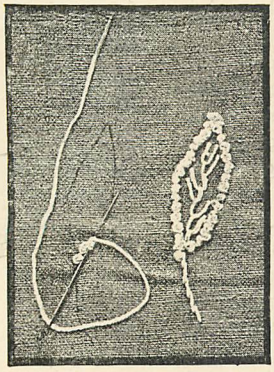


FIG. 4.

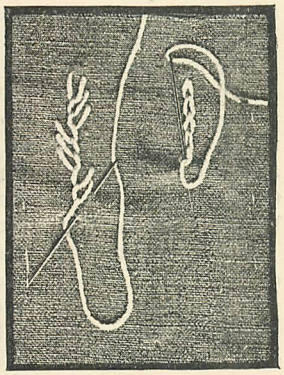


FIG. 5.

the design lying on your material clearly outlined in the pounce, but so lightly done that a breath will damage it. You next go over it all carefully with a thick pencil or pen and ink. You will do this better if your hand is resting on a firm flat piece of wood or a thick book. At any artist's shop you will be able to get, at a very small cost, a little wooden bridge, or "hand-rest," which is extremely useful.

It would be impossible in the space of one article to enumerate all the various stitches which can be used in Mount Mellick work, but if those given here are mastered the worker will find herself possessed of sufficient to make great variety in any piece of work she undertakes, and the more of the embroidery that she executes the longer will be her list of stitches, which she will invent as she goes on, and yet which are all more or less offshoots of the ones named here.

Use coarse cotton for padding, finer for embroidering, but do not mix two sizes for the latter—the result is not satisfactory. Remember that though the cotton

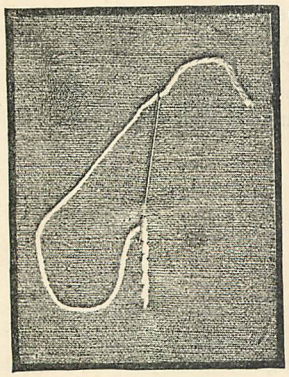


FIG. 6.

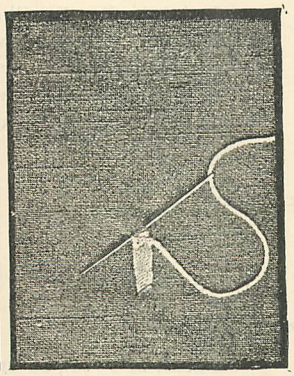


FIG. 7.

you use is coarse, finish is absolutely necessary for good work. By this I mean that your outlines must be perfectly true, your stitches even, your satin-stitch smooth, with no inequalities of padding or gaps caused by loose stitches. I am not going to give you long directions about "holding your cotton under one thumb" and "slightly slanting" your needle, because I have very small faith in these written directions. I am, however, convinced that if you study carefully the figures illustrating this article, and place needle and cotton as you see before you, that you will learn how to do the stitches, though, of course, practice alone will secure excellence in the workmanship. As to which kind of stitches apply to particular patterns, no general rules can be given; you must be guided by your eye and the general effect. For example, satin-stitch, as in Fig. 1, is adapted more particularly for conventional designs; the rough outline leaf, done in French knots (Fig. 4) for blackberry leaves.

But before I go on I have something to say about the padding, which is a very much more important part of the embroidery than many workers have any idea of. The stitches of the padding should lie on the surface of the part to be worked, consequently as little as possible of the material should be taken up with the needle. If you wish the embroidery to be very much in relief, then run a second or third row

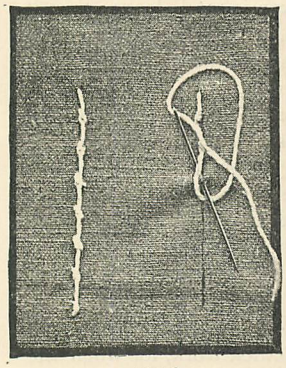


FIG. 8.

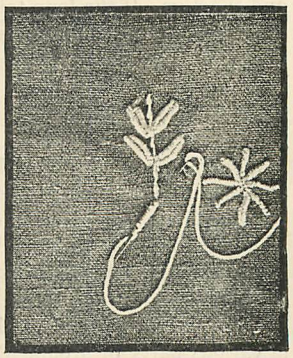


FIG. 9.

of lines, keeping the thickness perfectly equal, and always padding in the opposite direction to which the embroidery stitches are to go.

In Fig. 2 a blackberry is given completely worked in French knots. The method of padding the centre, as you would darn, is by far the best. The French knots are made as will be seen in Fig. 3. Although I have said that the same size of cotton should be used throughout the embroidering of one piece of work, yet, as every rule has its exceptions, I will admit that for French knots I generally use a coarse number. The other drawing

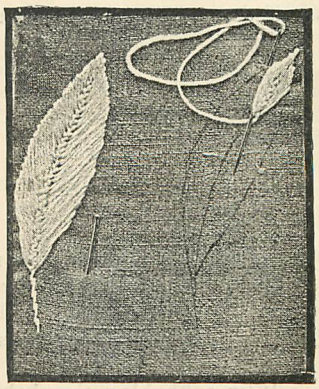


FIG. 10.

in Fig. 3 is the saw-tooth button-holing, useful for the edge of work. This, of course, can be varied in many ways.

From the blackberry fruit we turn to the leaf on Fig. 4, or rather the section of a leaf, which it will be seen is worked simply in a row of French knots outlining the whole, and the centre having some feather-stitching. Every one almost knows how to do feather-stitching, and is also acquainted with the plan of doing two or three branches, according to fancy. Care must always be taken to keep it straight, and the length of the stitches equal. Simple chain-stitch is found on Fig. 5, and that comes in usefully in many ways. The small loop-stitch, which fills the centre of Fig. 1, is very easy and effective. If the loop taken is made larger, then it serves for wheat-ears, daisies, and tiny sprays of leaves.

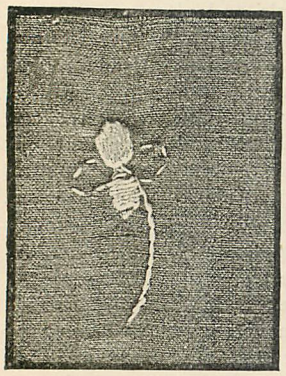


FIG. 11.

Fig. 6 is common stem-stitch, which all who do crewel-work will know quite well. I so often, however, see it so very badly done that I may as well give the hint that perfection in this stitch very much consists in taking each stitch precisely opposite the former one, and not allowing your needle to slant at all. In direct opposition to this is the overcasting stitch, which Fig. 7 shows us. There the knack is to get your stitch always slanting, working from right to left or *vice versâ*, as you please.

Fig. 8 is called snail-trail-stitch, and is very useful in various parts of Mount Mellick work, for when the pattern is of large bold leaves, embroiderers often vary the effect by filling in surfaces with snail-trail, chain-stitch, or else crossing the leaf with stitches fastened down where they meet, and producing an effect like trellis-work.

Bullion-stitch is given on Fig. 9, and here I must ask my reader to observe carefully exactly how the needle is placed before the cotton is rolled round it, for if the needle is drawn out as the tyro generally does, and the cotton then twisted, it is most troublesome, and almost impossible to result in a good stitch. Bullion-stitch serves for a great many purposes. In our illustration it is used for wheat-ears, and the star at the side shows another way of using it. It also answers for accentuating the veining of leaves, the anthers of lilies, etc.

One of the easiest, and perhaps the most effective ways of embroidering leaves is shown on Fig. 10. It is simply feather-stitch done closely together, always taking care to work one stitch to right, the next to left alternately. If two are made on one side to one or three on the other, the centre veining, which should be pretty and even, is spoilt.

In Fig. 11 you will see a small flower, about the size of a blackberry flower, and the method of padding will be easily learnt. Another way of doing this flower is to button-hole each petal to the edge, having carefully padded it first, and letting the outline of your padding be well within the line of the petal, so as to permit of each petal being clear and distinct. In either case a few French knots are made in the centre.

In Fig. 12 I have given a leaf which should be worked in satin-stitch. Again I must remind the worker of the need of evenness in padding.

FIG. 12.

In ironing Mount Mellick work care should be taken to have a thick piece of flannel or blanket under the ironing cloth, so that the raised work may not be flattened. Although, as I have said, true Mount Mellick work is done on white material in white cotton, still I will whisper in confidence to my readers that I have done it in filoselle silks on Roman satin, and that the effect was extremely handsome. In purse twist and knitting silk much may be done in the same way, and the idea of doing it thus will, I feel sure, be new to many readers, as it was until recently to myself.

AN OLD-TIME SONG.

BLOW, softly flow, thou murmuring stream !
Nor dare disturb my loved one's dream :
With lulling sound glide past her bower,
Nor wake her in this happy hour.

Blow, softly blow, thou balmy air !
The rudest winds would hush to spare
So dear, so sweet, so bright a flower,
Blow softly past her tranquil bower.

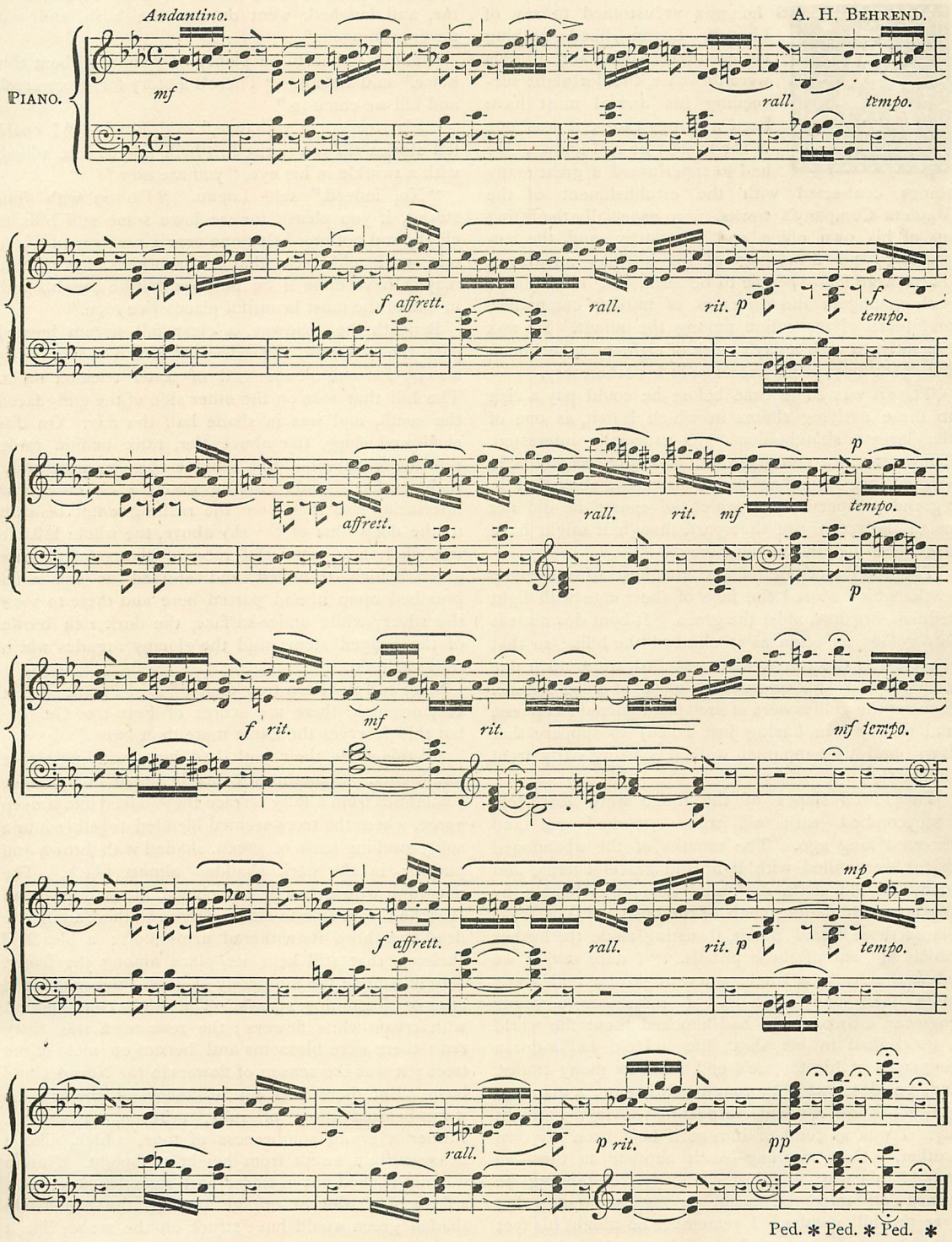
Breathe gently o'er her rosy cheek,
Lest thou her happy slumber break :
Perhaps of me she dreams to-day,
Her exiled lover, far away.

WILLIAM COWAN.

The Child's Petition.

FOR PIANOFORTE.

A. H. BEHREND.



HAD HE KNOWN.

A STORY OF NEW ZEALAND GOLD THIRST.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

AS he was accustomed to say of himself, Logan liked nothing better than work, and if this were the case, the fortnight succeeding his arrival must have been a happy time; it was one of the busiest he had known. He had to superintend a great many things connected with the establishment of the Diadem Company's works, more especially the fitting up of his own office and laboratory, and the unpacking and arranging of his various apparatus. There were many people to be seen, long conferences with managers and directors of mining companies, and tours of inspection among the mines. He was not satisfied with a day's work of eight or nine hours, but spent most of his evenings in his laboratory.

Thus it was some time before he could pay a visit to those outlying claims in which Burrit, as one of the largest shareholders, was especially interested. They were in a country which had only recently been worked, but which, as Burrit observed, abounded in "grand prospects:" by which, of course, he did not mean the scenery of that part, though it might have been described in the same words.

The road was one of the roughest of the many tracks which scored the face of the range with light reddish streaks amidst the green. It bent downwards into gullies as often as it climbed the hills; so that the crest of the range, when reached, came upon one as a surprise—an unexpected piece of good-fortune. Some of the gullies were of such phenomenal steepness, and (heavy rain having just fallen) so slippery that Burrit and his companion walked, starting early from the hotel.

The lower slopes of the range were absolutely honeycombed with old mines, worked out and deserted long ago. The mouths of the abandoned drives were filled with light and graceful ferns, and many an old shaft, dark and deep, was hidden by the luxuriant undergrowth of the bush. "Dangerous places those," said Burrit, thrusting aside the bushes which hid one of these pitfalls. "I dare say, if we knew the truth, a tragic story might be told about more than one of them. I remember a young engineer, a Swede, who had knocked about the world a good deal in his short life. He'd half-a-dozen languages at his tongue's end, knew as many trades, and, besides, was a thorough gentleman: a man you couldn't know without respecting—loving, I might say. I was as fond of him as if he'd been my own brother. One morning—such another as this—we walked this way, and just where you're standing he turned off into the bush, saying he was going over the hill yonder. I remember he caught his foot somehow, and almost fell. 'Take care!' I shouted; 'there are lots of holes there.' He turned, looked at me, and laughed, went on into the bush, and was never seen again."

"There seems to be plenty of romance about this place," said Logan. "There's a story for every creek and hill we come to."

"It's steeped in romance," said Burrit. "I could tell stories till you're tired; which maybe," he added, with a twinkle in his eye, "you are now."

"No, indeed," said Logan. "Go on with your stories, if you please, for we have some stiff hills to climb, and nothing helps one over a rough road like a tale well told. So that's Kirkbride's. Kirkbride mayn't have done it on purpose, but he put his mill in one of the most beautiful places I've seen."

Beneath the roadway, a clear full stream hurried past the old mill, the wheel of which was turning slowly, for one slender rill of water trickled on it. The hill that rose on the other side of the gully faced the south, and was in shade half the day. On this shadowed slope, tier above tier, rank behind rank, rose the fern-trees—ferns innumerable, unsurpassable, their perfect fronds curving above each other and interlacing; so that from the rushing water beneath to the deep blue of the sky above, the whole hillside was clad in a wonderful robe of changeful delicate green, which trembled and swayed as the wind breathed upon it, and parted here and there to show the silvery-white under-surface, the dark rich brown of the fringed stems, and the gloomy arcades which they enclosed.

"We call it 'Fern-tree Gully,'" said Burrit. "Not very original: there are scores of Fern-tree Gullies; but this deserves the name more than most."

All this while their path had been winding higher and higher. Sometimes it was hemmed in by trees; sometimes from a lofty terrace they looked into a deep gorge, where the trees seemed blended together into a softly-swelling mass of green, shaded with brown and purple; in the dark shadows almost black. The telegraph wire crossed this chasm, like a fine thread stretched from side to side. Here and there a gigantic dead tree threw its withered arms aloft: a bleached skeleton that still kept its place among the living. Rarely, among the monotony of green, one caught the glint of blossoming sprays. The ixerba was spotted with cream-white flowers; the rewa-rewa was rusty red; there were blossoms and berries on most of the trees; it was the season of flowers in the New Zealand bush. But there was no brilliancy of colour: no warm-hearted glow of ruby, crimson, or orange. Rather a grand sombreness of tone, which, like a heavy curtain, swept from height to height. Nature was not tricked out in tinsel and spangles here; and a flash of scarlet or orange amongst the exquisitely shaded green would have struck on the senses like a profanity.

Onward they went, higher and higher, among trees that seemed bigger yet than those that were left behind. At a sudden turn, the road cutting had divided the roots of an immense kauri, and the gum had trickled out and hardened in long crystal pendants, brittle as spun glass. Springs burst out even at the top of the hill, which seemed a fountain of waters, gushing and spouting from every crevice. They stopped to drink at one of these streams, which trickled across the road, and which, Burrit said, was the sweetest, coldest water within fifty miles. Close by, a little hut had been built of the trunks and the broad leaves of the nikau palm. There was a blacksmith's forge inside, the hearth still strewed with the embers of its last fire.

"This is Peter Black's old shanty," said Burrit; "we'll lunch here. I'm one of those who believe in having their meals regular, when you can get them. There are times when you can't; and I've been near starvation in this very place."

They were now on the very top of the range. The road crossed in the saddle between two peaks. Here one looked from sea to sea; the western coast, with the settlement in its sheltered nest, was far behind; the eastern was in front. The rounded outlines of forest-clad hills followed one another like the steps of a grand staircase, lower and lower till they sank into the plain, which, on the verge of the sea, curved in long sandy beaches, swept by white lines of foam. Beyond, blue and misty, lay a chain of islands, the sentinels of the outer coast.

"That's the new rush," said Burrit, pointing to one of the larger bays, where a river found its way into the sea, and where, on the green flat through which it meandered, some dots of white represented the tents and first few buildings of an infant settlement.

"Oh, that's the place, is it?" said Logan. "I should like to get there. How far is it?"

"I suppose eight or nine miles. You are not thinking of going to-day?"

"If it could be managed. I don't know whether I shall have another opportunity; and if nine miles is all the distance, it will be no more to go on than come back."

"It can be easily managed before dark, if you don't mind a long tramp, and pretty rough accommodation at the end of your journey."

"I'm used to long tramps, and I've roughed it too often to be fastidious."

"But how about finding your way? I can't go with you. I must be home to-night; I've things to look after; besides, if I didn't turn up, my wife and daughter would raise a regular hue and cry after me, scour the whole bush, and never rest till they'd brought me back again, whether I wanted or not. That's one of the blessings of a married man."

"And a very good thing to know someone's solicitous about your welfare," said Logan. "Oh, I can do very well alone. I think I have the bump of locality very fairly developed; I can generally find my way about. Give me a few directions, and I shall get on all right."

This was agreed to. Burrit's two claims, the Happy Thought and the Mary Anne, were close at hand. It did not take long to inspect the workings, for the good reason that very little had been done. Great wealth might lie hidden there—the mine managers constantly asserted that such was the case—but so far the small returns from an occasional crushing had not sufficed to pay expenses, and the shareholders had been exasperated and thinned out by frequent calls. Burrit himself had been on the point of sacrificing his shares. But a new leader which promised well had been struck in the Happy Thought, and had decided him to "hold on" for awhile.

"That lode is likely to set us right again," he said. "They might have picked it up long ago if MacFergus, our manager, had taken my advice. But just because it was mine, he wouldn't. He's one of those obstinate, pig-headed men, who can neither be led nor driven, and a nice lot of the Company's money has been wasted through his stupidity."

Burrit collected specimens, and descanted volubly on the different kinds of ore, while his companion calmly listened, seldom offering an opinion. MacFergus appeared, and after five minutes' conversation, Burrit and he quarrelled violently. They were perpetually at strife. "Hates me like poison!" Burrit said. "I've known him twenty years, and we've been at loggerheads most of the time."

After leaving the Happy Thought, Logan and Burrit parted company, and the latter followed the homeward path alone. As he wandered along in the dreamy afternoon stillness of the bush, the force of old associations impelled him to seek for the place where, as he had told Logan, he had lost his way, and come near losing life itself. Could he find that enormous tree against whose buttressed trunk he had sheltered from the cold drenching rain, and passed his first night in the bush, miserably enough? He left the road for a footpath, marked only where the roots that sprawled across the ground had been trodden white and bare; and which, after a while, was obliterated altogether. The tree eluded his search; he must give this foolish fancy up, and see about getting home again. In five minutes he ought to regain the track; as long again should bring him out on the open road. But five minutes had been numbered several times, and neither track nor road appeared: only the infinite variety of the bush; nothing repeating itself, and yet every hill or hollow like every other: an endless entanglement of trees, creepers, and undergrowth.

He was lost: no use blinking that fact. He, an old bushman, who had scrambled up these hills so many times! Lost again: just as he was years ago; only in this case he did know which side of the range he was on—the wrong one, of course. Well, the proper thing to do was to go on climbing; he would infallibly get to the top, and from thence have an outlook of some distance, and be able to judge how far he was out of the way, and how it might be regained.

He struck upwards through heavy bush, so matted together that it was with difficulty he forced himself along. Great rocks projected from the ground, and dangerous clefts were concealed by the vegetation, so

"BURRIT AND HE QUARRELLED VIOLENTLY" (*p.* 107).

that in places he had to feel for every step. At length, crashing over dead and rotten timber, plunging through thorny thickets and sharp-leaved bushes, he felt the fresh wind on his face, saw the yellow glare of the western sunshine, and came out on the very ridge-hills sloping seaward before and behind, and on either hand a mountain mass of almost bare rock. Beneath him he heard the roar of a large waterfall, and far away, down in a narrow valley, saw a house set in a square patch of green, which doubtless was a grass-field.

He knew where he was now.

"Why, these are the 'Sentinels'!" he cried, glancing at the rocks; "and that is Ingram's. How have I got so far? Well, I won't turn back again. Being here, I shall make a bee-line down this gully some way or other."

He began to go down cautiously and slowly, the ground being exceedingly rough and steep. The waterfall sounded louder and louder, and knowing by this he was on the verge of a descent still more abrupt, he was doubly careful of his steps. On the very edge of a gulf—how deep he knew not—he paused, steadied himself, and looked over. A stream went foaming and whirling past the jutting rock on which he had an insecure foothold. The water rushed down its narrow rock-bound channel, made one wild leap into the gorge beneath, and seemed to melt away in a cloud of mist.

Rapt in a pleased surprise, he stood on the brow of the cliff, looking downward. He had nothing of artist or poet in his composition, and, as a rule, paid little attention to the finest scenery. But now, in a place which he had often passed close by, but never seen so near, he was stirred with a vague wondering admiration of the placid beauty, the utter loneliness of the glen through which the wild stream poured; the solemn majesty of those eternal heights of stone, whose shadows stretched so far behind, the grandeur of the forest growth, which, meeting everywhere, towered against the sky, save in the gap, where the water went westward, and the sunlight entered in broad beams of gold.

"This is beautiful!" Burrit thought. "If Amy could only see it! The loveliest, loneliest place on all this range; and, if it weren't for the waterfall, as silent as the grave!"

Immediately there smote on his ear a sharp, ringing sound. Below him, someone was striking on the hard rock—some miner at work, he conjectured.

In haste to see who this was, he began to descend the side of the cliff, letting himself down by roots and branches of trees. The sound ceased, there was a profound stillness, and when, not without difficulty and

danger, he had reached the bottom of the fall, no one was to be seen.

"Cleared off when he heard me coming," he thought. "What's the fellow afraid of? Oh! here's where he was working."

A considerable quantity of the rock had been broken down. It was blackish-grey in colour, thickly veined with quartz, which glittered with a meretricious splendour Burrit knew too well to mistake for gold.

"So you've been deluded by this?" he said, smiling. "There may be something better as you go along; but so far I'm afraid you haven't earned wages. Hallo! these are your picked specimens. Really, it would be worth while to put a little gold among them; the poor fellow has been so particular in choosing stuff that contains nothing of the kind."

An idea struck him; he laughed, and slinging from his shoulder the bag of specimens, which, despite several temptations to part with it, he had carried up hill and down from the Happy Thought, emptied it, mixing the contents with the small pile of worthless stone he had been derisively turning over with his foot.

"There!" he said, in foolish exultation, "I'm glad to be rid of that weight. I wondered what possessed me to load myself so; there was nothing specially valuable. But if there's only a pennyweight in it, he'll be raised to the seventh heaven of delight when he gets it tested: as, no doubt, he will very soon. It will be a sell for him when I tell him where the gold came from."

Still smiling at the capital joke he had played on his friend—for he had guessed that Ingram had been working here—Burrit turned away from the place. Of all the mischievous tricks he had devised—and these were not a few—this was likely to be most serious in its consequences. He would have laughed at the idea that such a trifle could influence his life or affect his happiness. But there is nothing in which we are more deluded than the comparative value of our actions. Down the stream he went his way, treading in Ingram's footsteps. At a bend in the valley, the shoulder of a hill, with its towering trees, came between him and the secluded waterfall, and its distant sound blended with the voice of other waters or that wild Æolian harp which the loitering winds played in the dim aisles of the bush. _____

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

"THAT man Burrit has been annoying me again with his stupid jokes," said the doctor, pausing in his solemn pacing of the balcony, and addressing Logan, who for coolness had brought his chair outside, and was sitting with a book in his hand, but not reading.

"Well?" he replied. He was almost as laconic as the doctor, and they got on exceedingly well together.

"He tried a nasty thing on me to-day. Two Auckland doctors down here just now: goodness knows why! Sent word to them I desired to consult with them over very remarkable case. Up they came, post haste, to McNeil's boarding-house, where I was visiting a boy ill with quinseys: nothing more; mild attack, too. Should have seen their faces! Had to say it was a hoax. Talk about the Furies! their rage was nothing to mine. I wouldn't stay in the house a week if it weren't for his daughter."

"She seems to work very hard to keep things together," said Logan.

"She does ten times more than any man I know," affirmed the doctor. "Nice position for her! Father with about half a brain; so lazy, he never works except by accident. Mother simple and fanciful, reads doctors' books, and imagines she has all the diseases described in them. It was her liver one year, her lungs the next, and now it's her heart that's affected. Not far wrong there; if she'd any heart at all, she'd rouse herself and help her daughter."

"Miss Burrit doesn't seem to tire of her duties," said Logan, amazed at the doctor's unusual fluency.

"Tire! She doesn't complain, you mean. Her endurance and strength of will are beyond belief. She sticks at nothing. Don't put your boots outside your door to-night. Clean them yourself, or if you can't, wear them till the leather peels off."

"What for?" exclaimed Logan. "Surely she doesn't do that?"

"She's done it once!" said the doctor, almost groaning. "I've bought some of that patent stuff, Peerless Gloss, and I daub mine over in my own room. I'll die before she shall clean my boots!"

"Think you'd better," said Logan. "I mean," he explained, "better do them yourself; but I thought they'd a servant girl and a boy."

"Well, the boy had gone home—father seriously ill—and the girl must chop her hand with a hatchet."

He paced up and down for a few times; then stopped and confronted Logan. "I mean to marry that girl," he said abruptly. "Just occurred to me I'd better tell you: thought it as well you should know; might prevent complications."

"Thank you," said Logan meekly; "but whom are you speaking of? The girl who chopped her hand with the hatchet? Because in that case I'm afraid there will be complications. I've observed that on Sundays and holidays she's accompanied by a young man: a fine, stalwart fellow."

"Mr. Logan!" said the doctor furiously.

"Well?" returned his fellow-lodger.

"Don't be so ridiculous! Is there more than one woman in this house, this settlement, this district, that a man not out of his senses could dream of marrying?"

"How in the world am I to know? I'm not acquainted with the whole of the population."

"There is not!" said the doctor triumphantly. "Even you, a regular woman-hater, can't ignore that fact. Shouldn't bother you with my confidences, only I—I can't understand anyone living in the same house with her, and not thinking as I do. The others—commercial travellers, book-agents: it's always one or the other—they're like the plague of locusts in this little place—I don't take into account. I'm never uneasy about anyone but you."

"Indeed," said Logan. "I wasn't aware I was dangerous to anyone's peace of mind."

"There's your own peace of mind to be considered," replied the doctor.

"Very kind of you to think of that," said Logan.

"Oh, I think of everything!" cried the doctor, not heeding the sarcastic intonation of his friend's voice nor the ominous frown on his face. "Of course, though, I don't suppose there's—er—er—anything. You've been here too short a time to——"

"How do you know?" interrupted the other teasingly. "I've been here five weeks, and in novels the sort of thing you allude to doesn't require half that time."

"But you're a cautious man," said the doctor. "You'd be a long time making up your mind."

"Whatever I am," said Logan, "you are safe with me, perfectly safe. But now," he added, thinking it was time this singular conversation had an end, "I must go down to my workshop, or I shall have sins of omission on my conscience to-night."

"And I must look after that boy and his quinseys," said the doctor. "Ought to have gone this afternoon; not dangerous, fortunately."

The laboratory seemed unusually and oppressively dull and silent when Logan had reached that place and shut himself in. Either because his work was less interesting than usual, or because he felt a little dispirited, and had been seized with a sudden disgust of things in general—an ailment common to all humanity—he began to wish he had stayed at the hotel, even with the prospect of having to listen to a great deal more about the doctor's one subject of conversation. He began to wish that someone would come in, and even as the thought formed itself, there was a knock, hesitating and uncertain in its sound. "Come in!" he cried, without rising, being just then writing out his report of an assay.

"Excuse me, Mr. Logan," said the visitor, entering quietly, as if he feared to disturb those studies which in the settlement were always spoken of with respect. "I ought not to interrupt you at this time; but I was here late to meet the steamer, and I saw a light in your window. I called to ask if you had examined the specimens I brought you last week."

"Oh, it is you, Mr. Ingram?" said Logan. "I was just wishing someone would come in. There are times when one may have too much of one's own company."

"Do you ever feel like that?" said Ingram, with a curious change of countenance. He was a tall, large-framed man; but his clothes hung loosely on him, as if lately he had grown thin, and his face, though not old, was very worn and deeply-lined, and, but for the light brown of the sunburn, would have been colourless. All this Logan noticed, and thought also how gloomy and how wild was the expression of his large dark eyes, and how restless his ever-moving hands.

"I was writing out the assay when you came in," said Logan. "It's very nearly the same as one I've just made of specimens sent down from the 'Happy Thought' claim. One might almost think yours had come from the same place. But I believe you said it was a new find, and you didn't wish the exact locality to be known."

"No, on no account," said Ingram. "I can tell you, though, it's a good way from the 'Happy Thought.' But I'm sorry to say I'm very ignorant of anything about mines and minerals. This now tells me very little;" he glanced at the report. "I see gold put down: so many grains. Is that much or little for the quantity of stone? Would you call the specimens rich?"

"Quite rich enough, if you have plenty of the same stuff. The gold is at the rate of about twelve ounces to the ton. This, you see, is the bullion obtained from your small parcel."

"And this is gold!" said the other man, fingering the yellow button in his palm. "I was right, then, after all. I knew—I thought it must be so; but it seemed incredible, too unlikely to be believed, that I, who've known nothing but ill-luck, should stumble on a treasure. Look here"—and he began to scrawl rapidly on a piece of paper—"all this is bare rock, some blackish sort of stuff; I don't know what it's called. It must be two or three hundred feet high, and twice as broad: a great cliff. And here is a fracture right across, as if it had been split with a hammer and chisel. And there I found it. It goes right to the top; it goes down to an immense depth: it must, for some of it comes out again lower in the creek. And, whether you believe me or not, when the sun shines fair into that cleft it's all like gold; it dazzles your eyes. Now, if I'd been speaking to one who knew the country, I should have said too much; but you are a stranger, Mr. Logan. I feel somehow that I can trust you. It must be a secret for the present."

"Yes, you can trust me," said Logan. "It would never do to talk about everything sent here for examination, and blurt out where or whom it came from. In your case it's very wise to say nothing for the present. The assays of these small parcels are often very misleading. When you can get a considerable quantity crushed—a ton or so—you'll be able to speak with certainty."

"Thank you," Ingram said. "Good-night. Remember, not a word. There are such things as spies!" and he bent his haggard face and glittering eyes near Logan, who instinctively drew back. "I have been watched and followed. I found strange footsteps near the place. I couldn't afford to lose it now: it's life or death to me."

"Lose it! why need you?" asked Logan. "Peg out your claim and get it registered; then, who can take it from you."

"If I were to lose it now," said Ingram, as if speaking to himself, "I should go mad!"

"It's possible you will, my poor friend, if you don't take care," was Logan's thought when he was once more alone. "Something wild and strange about the man. The doctor had better examine into the state of his brain instead of concerning himself about Burrit's."

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

IT was afternoon, warm, silent, slumberous, and Burrit was in the bar: "as a mere matter of form," to quote his frequent saying. He leaned against the door-frame reading the newspaper, a bi-weekly publication. The view which he had of the street showed the imposing fronts of several of the chief buildings of the settlement, the banks, much in need of painting, the post-office, a general store, a ladies' emporium, which for six months had displayed the same trimmed hats in its windows, the police-court and the lock-up, a ramshackle place that a desperate criminal could have got out of in ten minutes. As it was usually empty, this did not matter.

"Dead and alive place!" thought Burrit, looking up from his paper. "Not a soul about. Yes, there's one," as a figure came in sight at the further end of the street: a tall man, with that stoop in the shoulders supposed to denote weariness or weakness, and with his gaze bent downwards on the dusty path he trod. He paused at the hotel, and entered.

"Hallo, Ingram," said Burrit, "glad to see you! We're like pilgrims in the desert. Very soon it will be telegraphed abroad when one man meets another in this deserted village."

As he spoke he was conscious of a change in the appearance of his friend, a wearied, over-strained look, as if some matter lay too heavy on his mind, or the smouldering fire of repressed excitement were consuming him. His gaunt form had never looked so wasted, his black eyes so large and bright. "I have something to tell you," he said. "You are alone, I see."

"Alone? Yes, that's the burden of my song. Well, have you drawn the grand prize in the lottery?"

"I believe I have," said Ingram, dropping his voice almost to a whisper. "Don't speak loud. We'd better go into one of the rooms; someone might hear."

"Why, man, what's all this mystery about?" said Burrit, half-amused, half-frightened, at the success of his silly joke. How would Ingram take it when he knew the truth? He felt very little inclined to tell him. However, he led the way to a private room.

"You've some unfenced land that joins mine on the top of the range, between the Sentinels," began the settler.

"Yes, I've a hundred acres," said Burrit, "and much good it does me. Look here, Ingram: it's no use asking me to fence. I can't afford it now. Positively, I haven't a sixpence. If you compel me, well, I'll have to go and chop wood out of the bush, and stick up some sort of a barricade myself."

"Oh, it isn't the fence," said Ingram, "though the want of one was the cause of my mistake. I've found a quartz reef, rich in gold, and for some time I thought it was on my property. But searching about, to make sure of this, I came on the surveyors' pegs, and to-day I've seen the plans in Willet's office. It is your land, not mine, and so I came to tell you at once. The reef's yours; I've no right to it."

"You're an honest fellow, Ingram," said Burrit, touched by the earnest look in the eyes that met his own. This man believed that he had won a treasure; but rather than defraud his neighbour was ready to push it away from him. He couldn't jeer at his real nobility by telling him the whole thing was a delusion.

"The reef may stay there, for all I care," he said abruptly. "Haven't I been deceived by reef after reef on this gold-field, and been in every smashed-up company you could name? I've sowed my money broadcast. You know what I've often said to you about mining here: that if we could strike a balance-sheet, putting down all expenses and all that's been gained, we should find that every ounce of gold taken out of the earth has been paid for at its full value. Look at those two companies I'm still in, for the reason that I can't very well clear out of them. The most we're getting is one or two per cent. on the money we've spent. Why, my good fellow, we'd better have left it lying in the bank."

"I don't understand you," Ingram said, eyeing him distrustfully. Burrit's arguments seemed rather specious. "This is very different from what I've heard you say at other times. I don't mean a reef with a speck here and a speck there of gold, but one that runs at more than twelve ounces to the ton, and where you've just to go on breaking down a cliff right before you."

"Oh, come now," said Burrit, "don't let your imagination go off at a gallop."

"I haven't only my word for it. Ask Mr. Logan; he's made an assay for me. I didn't pick the specimens"—("I know you didn't," thought Burrit; "and they must have been a long way richer than I'd any idea of.")—"They're nothing to some I've got out since."

"Oh, I dare say," Burrit answered, with an air of indifference. "You're speaking to a very old bird, Ingram. That's always the way with our mines: splendid prospects, flattering reports from the assayers, then the patch is soon worked out, and the whole thing falls flat as a pancake. Have nothing to do with the reef: that's my advice. I don't mean to."

"You mean you won't work it, though it's on your own land?" questioned Ingram. "You won't go into it with me on shares?"

"No; I don't believe it's worth working," said Burrit, with perfect sincerity.

"But I do," said Ingram earnestly, his hands nervously trembling. "I must believe what I've seen. Will you sell the land to me?"

"Will I sell the land to you?" Burrit repeated, rather vacantly. "Ah, well! that's another question."

If temptation were not a sudden, subtle thing, it might be easily overcome. We should have time to marshal our reserves, furbish up our weapons, and probably to make a successful stand for the right. But the forces of evil, whatever they may be, do not hesitate. Before we know it, the outworks have fallen, and it is an easy step to that inner citadel which a moment before had proudly deemed itself unconquerable.

In a second the thought presented itself to Burrit. What if Ingram did buy the land, he naming such a price as would relieve him from his most pressing

engagements? He had given a bill of sale for £300 on household furniture and effects. He had not told wife or daughter about this; but if it were not paid in a few weeks, he would have to submit to a forced sale of everything in the hotel. This would be ruin—his occupation would be gone, his means of livelihood taken away; he could only start again on borrowed money, supposing that anyone would lend to a man whose credit was so worn-out. Lately, under all his gaiety and apparent nonchalance, he had been haunted by this bill of sale; it was a spectre that refused to be exorcised, a trouble that, unlike most others, he could not forget. By a sudden impulse he grasped at the first chance of escape from this calamity. That Ingram was shamefully deceived: that it was nothing less than fraud to take his hard-earned money for a piece of land which Burrit fully believed to be as barren of gold as the road running past his door, and which, moreover, was not of much use for any purpose: that all this was cruel, mean, unjust, had sunk out of sight for a moment. In like case, in small things as well as great ones, we have all been equally blind.

Of course, it was a shame to allow the poor fellow to go on in his delusion. He wished he'd never played that trick on him; he'd tell him now; but the money must be had from somewhere. He would—yes; he made a solemn vow to himself he would make it good to Ingram when he got turned round a bit. It was only a loan: and he could never be blamed for the reef being a failure; he'd predicted it. Ingram would have to acknowledge that, and also that until it was suggested to him, he had not thought of selling the land.

"I'll not deny," he said, sinking his eyes before Ingram's gaze, "that you're tempting me in this, Ingram. I'm badly in want of money. I tried to sell that land not long ago, with some other properties I have scattered about. I couldn't get a bid. No one would buy it for farming; no one wants it for timber; it was cleared of kauri long ago, when the mill on your creek was running; it's no use for anything but mining, and, as I told you, I've no faith in that."

"What will you take for it?" said Ingram.

Burrit fidgetted about restlessly.

"You must understand I don't really wish to sell. But some way or other I must have £300 by the end of the month; and I don't know where any part of the money is to come from. If I can't get that for the land, I might almost as well not sell it at all."

"I'll give you that," said Ingram, drawing a deep breath. "I haven't the money just now; but in a week or two I may have."

"A fortnight will do," said Burrit. "If things aren't quite so rosy as you expect, you can't say I've not warned you," he added, with rather a sickly smile. "You won't go back on me?"

"Not I," said Ingram. "I'm going into this with my eyes open. Only this business must be kept secret between our two selves. Don't tell anyone about the reef or of the land being sold till I give you leave."

"Oh, keep it as dark as you like," said Burrit. "I don't want to talk about it."

Here their interview practically ended. Before leaving, however, Ingram mentioned that he had brought some more specimens down, and had called at Logan's office, but found him out.

"He's in Auckland now," said Burrit, "but will be back again to-morrow. Leave them with me; I'll see that he gets them."

This was agreed to; they shook hands and parted.

That night, when the hotel was closed, Burrit opened the sack which contained the specimens, and examined them. There were two packages, one of quartz, the other a quantity of gravelly, sandy loam, which seemed to have been obtained from a hole sunk on the margin of a creek. That there was no gold in either, except in microscopical quantities, Burrit felt tolerably certain. Ingram would know this almost immediately after Logan's return: quite in time for him to cry off his bargain.

With the samples before him, he sat for a long while, thinking. Then he rose, and fearing to disturb the rest of the household, who by this time must have gone to bed, went softly down the passage into the store-room of the hotel. Here he chose one of the three canvas bags, filled with some very heavy substance, and labelled "Happy Thought, Nos. 1, 2, and 3." These, like Ingram's specimens, were awaiting the return of Logan. Burrit broke the seal of No. 1, and emptied the specimens into the sack which had formerly contained Ingram's. These he placed in the "Happy Thought" bag, sealing and labelling it as before. This took him some time, for the seal and label had to be an exact copy of those of the other two bags, and Burrit, unaccustomed to writing, found the peculiar characters and figures of his friend MacFergus exceedingly difficult to imitate.

However, it was done at last; but the other sample remained to be dealt with, and this required more delicate handling. He could not mix quartz specimens with it: the imposture would at once be detected; besides, he could not venture to meddle with another of the "Happy Thought" bags. He would have to be careful in what he did, for Logan, a man who had been on half-a-dozen different gold-fields, must have seen a good deal of this sort of trickery, and would be too well-trained to be easily deceived. But Burrit himself had not lived thirty years among miners for nothing. Though he had never yet stooped to dishonesty, he had come into contact with it pretty often. In this matter he needed no instruction; he knew too well how the thing was done.

It was late in the night when he finished. After he had removed all traces of his work, he unlocked the door, and taking up a candle, proceeded to carry the specimens back to the store-room. But he had hardly started with his burden, when the door of the opposite room opened, and a broad stream of light fell across the passage. Burrit staggered backwards in his sudden fright, nearly dropping the bag. His daughter met him face to face.

"What are you doing up, this time of night?" he cried angrily.

She did not answer immediately; his sudden appearance and the angry tone of his voice had startled her; he had seldom spoke to her so roughly. To Burrit it seemed as if her pale countenance and dark-ringed eyes looked at him accusingly and reproachfully.

"My word, Amy!" he said, with a forced laugh, "you frightened me; you go about like a sleep-walker. You ought to have been in bed three hours ago!"

"I sat up to finish some sewing," she replied, "and somehow got past my sleep. I didn't feel as if I wanted to go to bed at all, so I've been reading for nearly an hour."

"You're up late much too often," said her father; "you do yourself harm. I've been putting things right, sorting over these specimens." This was the only plausible explanation he could think of; Amy knew he often had specimens in the house. "Let me see you upstairs," he insisted. "Even if you can't sleep, you're better in bed."

He watched her go upstairs. "A good thing it was only Amy," he congratulated himself. "She will never mention it." No; but the thought suggested itself, and for another hour or two of that wakeful night made him uncomfortable: what if she should suspect? what if she found him out? Oh, miserable to lie fallen, degraded, in the sight of that pure soul! Oh, cruel to load with bitterest sorrow a heart so truthful and so kind!

"BURRIT STAGGERED BACKWARDS IN HIS SUDDEN FRIGHT" (*p.* 112).

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

THE bargain was concluded. Ingram had bought the land, and Burrit was in possession of the £300 he so earnestly desired. Some days before this, Ingram called at the assayer's office to inquire how his last samples had turned out.

Logan's report was even more satisfactory than the first had been. The quartz specimens were very fine; but he frankly confessed that there was something puzzling about the other sample: that which Ingram had thought might contain alluvial gold. But just now the Diadem Company were starting their works, and he had not had time for more than a hurried examination. He begged to be allowed to keep the parcel till he should be more at leisure.

"All right," said Ingram. "But there's gold in it, you say."

"Oh, yes," answered Logan, "but it's not exactly the sort of gold one finds in alluvial deposits, and it's mingled through the whole of the stuff in rather a curious way. But I'm really not able to say anything definite; I've hardly had time to look at it."

"These are the last samples I shall bring down," said Ingram. "I'm going to take your advice, and go in for quartz-crushing on a large scale."

As he went out, MacFergus, the manager of the "Happy Thought," thrust past him roughly, and with a fierce and threatening countenance demanded of Logan what he meant by sending him such an assay as that of No. 1 of the three bags sent down from his mine.

"My dear sir," said Logan, amused at the belligerent attitude of his visitor, "I can only tell you what's in the stone; I can't create what isn't there."

"That's your regular excuse," said MacFergus, "but it won't do in this case. You can't bamboozle me, Mr. Logan. As it happens, I myself put those specimens into the bag, sealed and ticketed them. They were the richest of the three lots, not the poorest, as you make out. Why, you don't find enough gold in them to be perceptible to the naked eye! They were three-quarters gold, I tell you."

"Perhaps there was some mistake in numbering the bags," suggested Logan. "No. 2 was very rich."

"I don't care a fig for No. 2!" retorted MacFergus furiously. "It's No. 1 I mean. You've mixed our parcels with someone else's, and foisted this worthless stuff on us. Why, I'd blush to send such stuff to be tested. I should know, without consulting you, what it was worth."

"No mistake of that kind has occurred," said Logan positively. "The worthless stuff, as you call it, was in your sample. I opened it myself, it was kept apart from others, and when I received it from Mr. Burrit, the seal and label were intact, so except by supernatural agency I don't see how it can have been changed."

"Burrit!" cried MacFergus, catching at the name of his old enemy. "Of course, he brought them down. I'll see Burrit at once," and with long strides and arms swinging violently, he dashed down the street towards the hotel. Burrit saw him coming, and knew that within the space of five seconds at most he must invent something to explain the mystery of the bags and appease the wrath of MacFergus, who was evidently in a towering passion. That he was able to do this, and that the manager went away quieted for a time, if still a little bewildered, was more creditable to his ingenuity than his morality.

Returning home after the question of the land had been settled, Ingram went to work at his mine with redoubled energy. Logan and Burrit were not likely to betray him, and in truth, under the pressure of other matters, had almost forgotten him and his affairs. The secret was still locked up in the breast of the lonely man, who stealthily took the same way every morning, who worked till late in the day, and who at night could hardly sleep for thoughts of the riches that would shortly be his—the happier, brighter future about to dawn. Sometimes, in broken slumbers, he dreamed of telling his wife, of spreading before her heaps of gold, and saying, "See, all this is yours; you shall never be poor or wearied or troubled any more. The best things the world can give are all for you, who gave up everything to share my sorrow and my want." Then he would awake, trembling and overwrought with an extravagant joy.

So far all had gone as he wished; he had not attracted any undue amount of attention. But at home there was one who watched him, and wondered anxiously what might be the cause of his changed demeanour. So silent and reserved had he become that his children were afraid of him, his wife shrank from questioning him about his long absences. At first she had thought he must be clearing or fencing at the further end of the farm, where this work was required. But while he laboured there other and more important things were neglected. He seemed to have abandoned his farm. When his wife timidly reminded him of bills unpaid, of work undone, he put her off with assurances that all would be right by and by; she had only to wait a little longer. Wait! Poor enough they had always been, now starvation stared them in the face. Distracted by his extraordinary conduct, Mrs. Ingram hardly knew which way to turn. The whole matter was an inexplicable, heart-breaking mystery. She seldom visited the settlement; she saw no one who could have told her of Ingram's search for gold. From himself no information was to be extracted. At night—the only time he was with his family—he sat as if absorbed in visions and in dreams, from which he had resolved not to awake, smiling vacantly or muttering to himself. At the rare times when he would talk freely, it was some extravagant rhapsody of better days that were coming to them all.

"We'll be out of the chrysalis stage soon," he exclaimed. "We'll unfold our wings and fly!"

"Ah! if we only could!" said Mrs. Ingram, with a weakly smile.

"Where would you fly to, Emily?" said Ingram; "say the word only. Shall it be home again? I'd like to see the old place, wouldn't you, dear?"—he did not notice that his wife was silently crying—"and the old folks too, though they were a little hard with us. Shall it be Sydney and the Blue Mountains? or Melbourne and the Gippsland Lakes? or the round trip—through Australasia and the Pacific Islands? We've the world to choose from."

"I'm afraid our wings are sadly clogged," said Mrs. Ingram.

"The clogs are easily got rid of. Isn't it delightful to think that as yet we've seen nothing, that everything will be fresh to us? All the wonderful things in great cities, all the splendid paintings and sculpture, all the grand music, all the beautiful scenery in all countries of the world! Should we ever be tired of wandering, ever weary of seeing, ever satisfied with hearing?"

"I don't know, dearest," said his wife, watching his eager face and glittering eyes, while a sudden terrible fear chilled her to the heart.

The next day Ingram determined to know the result of his crushing. He was feeling strange that morning, dizzy and faint, as if his strength were exhausted, and considering the rate at which he had been living, this was highly probable. Still upheld by strong excitement, he rode to the settlement, and presented himself at Logan's office in the Diadem Company's establishment.

Here there was great bustle and activity; the battery was at work, and twenty head of stampers were descending with a frightful din, which, so far from irritating the servants of the company or injuring their

nerves, was rather liked by them ; the manager averring that it had a soporific effect on him, and that if it stopped in the night he immediately awoke. Everyone was busy, Logan especially, and it was some time before he could be seen. When at last Ingram was alone with him, he fancied that he looked at him pityingly, and was in no haste to satisfy his impatience.

"You will guess that I've come to ask about the crushing," said Ingram nervously.

It might be only a fancy, but he thought he read the signal of failure in Logan's face, and felt himself turn white to the very lips.

"Can you bear a disappointment?" said Logan kindly.

Ingram made no answer.

"I am as much astonished as you can be at that crushing There was absolutely nothing in it like the samples. I have your word for it that they were genuine, and I do not for a moment doubt it. Still, I am obliged to tell you that you have spent your time and strength in excavating a barren reef."

"There was no gold in it?" said Ingram faintly.

"So little, that I might almost say none at all."

There was a pause. It seemed to Ingram as if Logan had receded into an immense black shadow, and that between this and himself the furniture of the laboratory was whizzing round and round in a furious maelstrom. He himself was falling into the same, and sinking down, down into eternal darkness.

Hands touched him. Logan was supporting him to a chair; an assistant ran out and returned with some brandy, which they gave him. He came to himself again, and sat up.

"Don't let this upset you," said Logan, his arm still around him.

"I am ashamed," he faltered. "I told you it was life or death to me."

"Tut! tut!" said Treloar, the manager of the battery, a big-framed, good-hearted Cornishman, who had hurried in to see what was amiss. "Never say die, man! You'll live to laugh at this! You'll find your gold yet in the fields of your farm."

Ingram scarcely heard him. "I have to thank you, Mr. Logan," he said; "you've been exceedingly kind. I've only my own ignorance to blame. I hope you or Mr. Treloar will tell me what I have to pay the company."

"Pay!" shouted Treloar; "why, nothing at all. You brought the first grist to our mill, yours was the first load that went through our battery. Are we going to charge for that, do you think? Logan, are we vampires?"

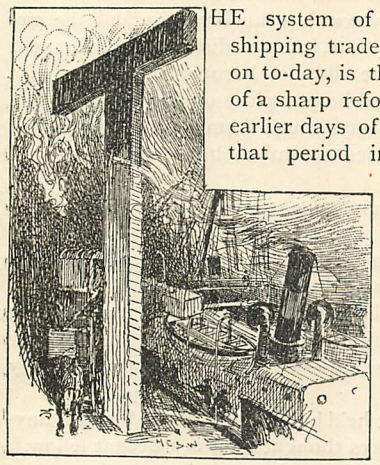
"Not that I'm aware of," replied his coadjutor. "I assure, you, Mr. Ingram, there's nothing to pay."

"Then," said the broken man, looking bewilderingly from one to the other, "Good-morning, gentlemen. I think"—and the smile on his face was piteous to behold—"I'd better go home."

END OF CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

THE PROPERTY OF A SKIPPER.

BY W. RUNCIMAN.



THE system of business in the shipping trade, as it is carried on to-day, is the present result of a sharp reformation. In the earlier days of steam, especially that period immediately preceding 1882, the captains had a superb time. To be skipper of an ordinary Mediterranean or Baltic screw was the great ambition of pushing mates; for there they could earn their £18 a month, and do it quite as well here in Europe as if they spent an anxious life in a Western Ocean "tramp." Besides, commissions were as easily nailed over here as they were further away. It is true the ship repairers and merchants of America could give the skippers their little presents without there being the slightest chance of it reaching the ears of the managers at home. For the repairs of a vessel the captain used to choose between rival repairers, and after the work was finished he expected to receive a commission. The cost of repairs was consequently heightened, so that the commission made no difference to the repairer; but the owner at home rather disliked having five per cent. (more or less) added to his bills in that way. Merchants were in the habit of handing over percentages on the freight to the captain. They had discovered that it was in their interest to do so; and in paying the freight to the owner they allowed for it. In return for business, merchants and brokers everywhere made presents to the captains. And in Europe they were not exceptional. What difference, then, did distance make if the managers were callous about commissions?

Many a captain at that time gathered enough before he was fifty to keep him in comfortable retirement. But when we speak of the property of that master mariner known as James E. Wills, it must not be supposed that it was the child of commissions. No, James had done his little bit before '82; but when the great depression set in, and the revolution came in shipping, he was still a young man, and he found that, if he was to become wealthy, he must try economy all

"A FEW AGED MARINERS HAD VENTURED ALONG THE PIER" (*p.* 117).

round. The managing owner was not able to send out dividends at the same time that commissions, which belonged by all rights to the ship, were disappearing into the skipper's capacious trouser-pocket. He discovered that he must make both his own expenses and his captain's diminish, or else his vessel would not pay. Jimmy growled, he spoke in irritated surprise, and then he declaimed, with flashing eyes and tously hair. True it is that his hearers always agreed with him, but then his audience was always made up of captains, and every one of them was active in objecting to the thieving economy. It is doubtful whether any fists were oftener hammered into the palms of their corresponding hands than were those of the skippers of the North. Poor Jimmy was more disappointed than most of them, for he had tasted only meagrely of the many dishes that might have been before him. The older men had fed almost to repletion. For a fortnight after the owner's disastrous announcement the skin of his face in colour could scarcely be distinguished from his gingery whiskers. Yet his bluster subsided before long, and the infuriated man swiftly settled down again. He was as easy-going as formerly. He was none of the uncomfortable sort. At times he had fired and flared; but the fortnight during which the intimation of the owner's new economy had troubled him was the longest time he had ever spent particularly vexed, and even those few days were not wholly given to exciting discussion. He could not live in a state of anxiety, and, because ambition meant anxiety, he was never ambitious. Had his wife not urged him on with plucky perseverance, he would not have become a captain.

Now when we know thus much of him and the circumstances of his time, it is not difficult to understand how it was that he did not become the owner of a dwelling-house until he was close on fifty years of age. Mrs. Wills had always saved from her half-pays, and she continually tried to imbue her good man with avarice.

At last enough money was gathered together for the great investment.

"Well, Kitty, my girl, we've got it at last," he told her after one voyage had come to an end.

"Why, I'm real pleased," she replied; and after a moment for reflection, she added, "Shall I go and see Robson to-morrow, or——No, I can get there easily to-night."

"I should think he'd build a ship-shape house if anybody can. I always thought he was a decent fellow."

And Robson, builder and contractor, was for several minutes discussed minutely. Jimmy thought he "would like to do him a good turn." The builder's open countenance and clear blue eyes were all material reasons for the selection. Thus the future order was settled.

Robson sold the proud couple a site directly opposite the dwelling they still rented. Jimmy was

determined to be severely business-like over the new house. The building could not be in a handier place; for there they could watch every brick that was laid, and every spot of mortar that was splashed between those bricks.

The laying of the foundation was a joyous affair. Only a few weeks were necessary to throw the bricks and sand into walls, and not many days after the roof had been put on, Captain Wills and his family were in their new abode. The house was mortgaged up to the last fifty pounds, but it was their very own. No longer was there rent to be paid. The sailor went away happy. A year passed. The feelings of James towards that builder had strangely transformed; for as month after month went by, and the inside plaster had never hardened, and the ceilings had shown uncommon inclinations, and one thing after another had gone wrong, the admiration which James and his wife once had for Mr. Robson entirely dwindled away. The news Mrs. Wills had for her husband when he came home from one trip was annoying. It was with great difficulty that the fire-grate could be kept together; she could stand it no longer, she must remove, for Robson would not help them any more.

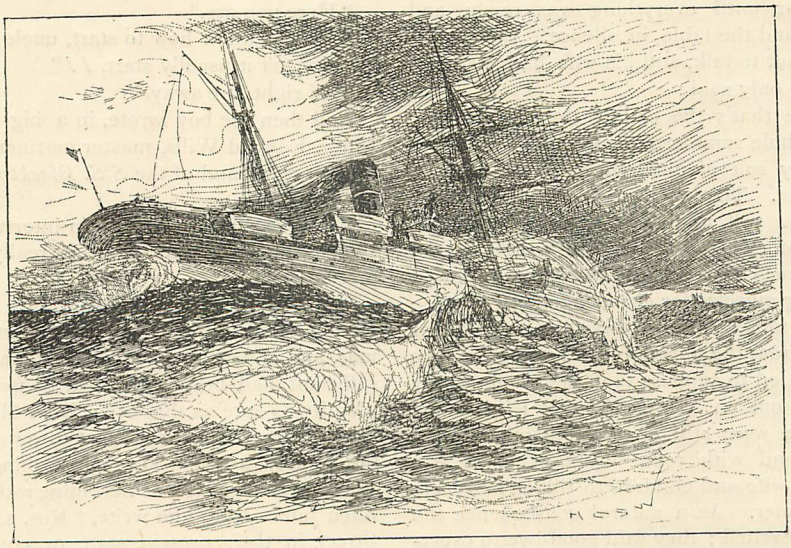
"Ah, the scoundrel! I always thought there was something queer about him. Don't you remember how he looked the first time you met him? I was impressed the first time he came here. My first impressions are never wrong. They've never been wrong yet. It's just what I expected," Jimmy blurted to his wife—and so on, and so on.

* * * * *

A heavy surf was beating on the beach, and for half a mile to sea the troubled waters were thickly smeared with white. A few aged mariners had ventured along the pier, but no one else was there, for the rushing monsters were throwing their crests over in places. It was a wild afternoon. The wind had been blowing for a couple of days hard from the north-east, and it had raised that nasty turmoil for which the coast is famous. The sea had not been breaking on the bar for over an hour, and the tide was running in; but the rush round the North Pier was a great deal stronger than usual, and the skippers of the little brigs, that had been darting in all day, knew that, although they were making the best refuge harbour along the coast, the swirl round the pier was not without great danger. That noble band, the Volunteer Life Brigade, were keeping careful watch from their tower on the cliff. Every ship that entered was followed until she reached the Narrows. Steamers they were not so particular about, for, once they had taken the entrance, they were safe. Jimmy's vessel was noticed during the afternoon plunging northward. She was light, and every wave that lifted her, left her propeller to whir-r in the air. She stood high out of the water, yet almost every sea came over the bows; and as they thundered down on to her main-deck, and then washed wildly aft, they gave the men some trouble.

Jimmy took her well to the north of the channel before he made his shot. And those ancient mariners on the pier, and the young brigadesmen, complimented the captain of that screw upon his wisdom. She was swung round, and, rolling desperately, she came between the piers. For a minute she was carried south, and then, with an extra plunge, she staggered into the stiller stream within.

She had scarcely passed the Narrows when the wind broke away once more. The heavy-marching waters had their crests torn off, and flying spray made everything look dim. The yellow foam that had gathered in the corners of the rocks was snatched up, and twisted round in many screaming whirlwinds. The ancient mariners shook the loose water off their



"JIMMY'S VESSEL WAS NOTICED DURING THE AFTERNOON."

"THE BOY WROTE, IN A BIG ROUND HAND."

coats, and sauntered home. The sun was setting. All around was one dark desolation. It was well for those seamen who happened to be ashore that night, and James was glad that he had managed to bring his vessel in before the worst had broken. For he had spent no easy hours the last two days. "Let's have some tea, hinny, and I'll get away to bed. I've not had a wink of sleep for forty-eight hours. Been on the bridge the whole time."

And while the table was being set, he nursed his little boy upon his knee. His elder daughter was old enough to help in the house, and she bustled round after her mother until everything was ready, and then they sat round the table in silence. James was too much worn out to talk, and his wife had the sense to be quiet. He only said:

"Well, I hope that's the end of the equinoctials. We've got the whole summer before us now."

Then, in a dry suit of underclothing, he tumbled into bed and slept. The house was kept quiet. The little fellow would yell in his weak treble now and again, but his mother's lengthened "hush-sh" soon put an end to all disturbance, and the skipper was allowed to rest his aching muscles for close on sixteen hours.

For a week or more after that day there were great preparations. From the appearance of the place one might have been led to suppose that the whole family was about to set out on a great journey; boxes lay on all sides, some were still open, while others were closed and bound with rope. Captain Wills was about to take his wife and children to Bilboa and back in his little steamer. As a natural consequence the youngsters were excited; they said good-bye to everybody with delightful energy, they hurried about the house, and Captain Wills was immensely pleased. In the evenings, when he could get away from the ship, he came home to have a dish of tea, and to jolt his wee son upon his knee. His elder daughter Kate played her latest "piece" on the piano, while Jenny her sister showed her father how well she could imitate his grimaces. She was especially delighted when an opportunity came for moving her scalp backwards and forwards. Just before supper the variety entertainment would be finished with a very ornamental jig from the captain.

Towards the end of his stay in harbour, James sent a verbal message to one of his nephews to the effect that, if it was possible, he was at once to visit the captain. He came and found that his uncle was more serious than usual.

"Well, what's up now, Uncle? You want me, don't you?"

"Sit down there, and I'll tell you. I want you to make out my will."

"You ought to do that yourself, should you not?"

"No, I couldn't put any of the long words in. We leave that for you boys that's been at school all your life."

"Well, but what do you want with a will? Little Jack is still living—at least, I presume he is."

"Oh, that's all right. But look here, my boy, you know that I'm going to take them away. If anything happened to us, *I* would like to dispose of the house and furniture."

"Go on! there's nothing going to happen to you yet a bit."

"Well, well, you never know. I had a very strange dream last night. I didn't half like it."

"I suppose we'd better set to then," said that responsible nephew. He evidently knew his uncle well, for he never thought of rallying him on his superstition.

"Have you got pens and paper?" he continued.

"Here you are."

"Do you know how to start, uncle?"

"Doesn't it usually start, *I?*"

"All right, fire away."

And then the boy wrote, in a big round hand, "I, James Edward Wills, master mariner, at this present time in command of the *S.S. Blackbox*, of D—, at the aforesaid time——"

"What's that?" the captain interrupted.

"At the aforesaid time; it really means, at the present time."

"That'll do; go on," and James dictated in plain, blunt English, while the boy put it into decent grammar, and added by the way a few longer words. After sufficient had been composed to make the captain's identity as sure as that of an Irish M.P., they reached the property part of it. Great care was taken to define the rickety house. The other things were minute. The boy thought it was becoming rather too ludicrous, when James bade him write, "Nos. 12 and 14, Romilly Street, in their present state or condition." At last they arrived at, "to my only son, John Wills——"

"Suppose he should be drowned?"

"Wait a minute; we'll come to that," he continued. "One quarter to each of my daughters, Kate Wills and Jenny Wills, and one quarter to my wife."

"Then if they are all drowned?" the boy interrupted again.

"Be quiet!" And they went on. The nephew was looking forward with concealed glee to a general mix.

"If at any aforesaid time any of these should die, their share shall be divided among the surviving ones, provided those who have died leave no heirs, in which case——"

"Go on, uncle."

"No, hang it! you put it straight.

"There shall then be no division whatever. In case my son, John Wills, and my daughters, Kate Wills and Jenny Wills, all die heirless, the whole of my house and other furniture shall pass to my aged mother, Catherine Wills——"

"Is it likely she'll be alive after your line's become so completely extinct?"

"You never know, man; she's got a lot of life in her yet, and I would rather like her to have the benefit of it while she is alive."

"—If my mother, Catherine Wills, should die before my children and their heirs are all dead, the possession of my house and my other property shall pass on to my nephew, William Wills——"

"Why, that's me!" the scribe interrupted.

"Certainly."

"—and the interest thereon up to the time of his taking possession of the said property. In case he should die——"

"I suppose I will."

"—the aforesaid possession shall pass on to his heirs, and their heirs. If they all die out, then the possession of my house shall pass in equal halves to my brothers, William Wills, the father of my aforementioned nephew, and to Thomas Wills."

Here he added their addresses in full.

"Should their heirs all die——"

"I hope not," the boy interrupted.

"—then my house and other property shall be divided into equal portions between——"

"Who on earth is coming now?" thought his nephew. "I say, uncle," he added aloud, "you'll have the pedigree of the whole of the families that are to come, down here soon. Pass another sheet."

"—the following charities,——"

"Oh!"

"—the Sailors' Hospital at D——, the Aged Sailors' Alfred Asylum,——"

"Is that the title?"

"Yes, go on."

"—the Infirmary in Newcastle, the Missions to Seamen, and the Deep Sea Mission."

Again the scribe thought: "Oh, dear! how much will the poor people get?"

"Look you here, uncle; when do you expect these charities will get anything?"

"Never you mind; I'm not going to let any of my money get into Chancery, or whatever they call it."

"Is that all I've got to put?"

"Date it, and I'll sign it."

It was dated and duly signed, when it struck Willie that it was necessary to have a witness for so valuable a document.

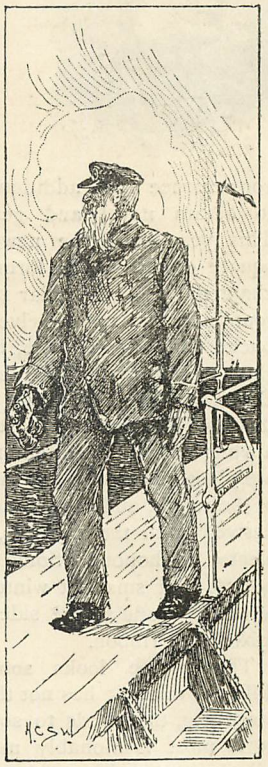
"What about a witness?"

"Oh, you'll do."

"No, I'm not old enough."

"Get the girl then; she's far enough over twenty-one."

The precious will was packed into a small tin box, and Willie took it over for his mother to keep in safety. His comments as he walked home were jumbled up strangely. He thought of his own good fortune—to become some day the owner of a mortgaged and rickety house. He roared and laughed over the prospect of the charities that would be benefited. Oh, it was amusing! The whole affair had become so absurd that he felt he must tell it to someone; but his sense of good faith compelled him to be silent.



"STILL THE OLD SKIPPER TRAMPS HIS BRIDGE."

The *Blackbox* sailed a day or two after this important transaction. The Captain was brisk and lively, for he had been relieved of great responsibilities, and his heart was light. His dreams were clearer, and he was able to interpret them satisfactorily. His superstition pointed to good luck. The auguries were auspicious, and he returned without mishap; and still the old skipper tramps his bridge. That will has not been needed yet, and I almost begin to wish it would never require to be carried out.

CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.—WHAT TO WEAR IN JANUARY.

I.—FROM OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENT.

WHAT a revolution there has been of late years in our ideas with regard to hats. I dare say many of you remember when it was not considered at all "the thing" to be seen in a hat in London, and in those days, no lady thought of putting on anything but a bonnet for outdoor wear when she was over thirty years of age. Now, women of all ages wear hats, and with the consequence that additional efforts are being made to obtain novel and generally becoming shapes. This year quite the newest hat is that with the square crown, which forms the initial letter of this chapter. The particular model is made in felt, surrounded by a band of velvet, fastened with a diamond buckle; not a small one, but a large and important clasp, which might have served to adorn a waistband. Over the edge of the brim falls some white lace, and this also is a new idea. It would be accompanied by a white veil, of lace or embroidered net. The feathers are placed as a plume at the back, resting on the edge of the crown, and this notion has been in a measure derived from the cockade, which women have now elected to honour. Some of the newest and smartest winter hats have a cockade at the side intermixed with ribbon.

This shape looks somewhat different when it has not the lace bordering, that tends to soften it. It is most fashionably made in silk beaver and in felt, and is rather severe in style. The crown is always hard and square, the brim shallow and turning slightly upwards.

Treasure any sable tails you may happen to possess, for they are now extremely useful in millinery. Sometimes the hat in the vignette is known by the name of "Four in Hand," and one of the prettiest I have seen this year had the crown surrounded by tawny orange velvet, as a background to two somewhat long sable tails. There is another form of fashionable square crown, which is quite different because it is soft. This is made of velvet and pleated at intervals into the brim. It hails, I am told, from Paris, but it has been eagerly adopted here by bridesmaids, who could hardly have anything prettier when it is made in white velvet, with a band of white ostrich feathers at the edge. Crowns of a distinct colour from that of the brim form one of the novelties in current millinery: for example, a red or a pink velvet crown appears on a black hat. It would have the three tips at the side, formed like a Prince of Wales's plume. The large brims with a mass of ostrich plumes on the outside, and either fine cord or satin cording at the edge, are just as fashionable as they have been during the past eighteen months for those whom they suit, and they are capable of an immense variety of shape. Sometimes the brim stands up from the face like an aureole, sometimes it is cloven in the front or at the side, and on other occasions at the back. These are not so generally becoming as the new sailor hat, which is low in the crown, has the brim turning up like a man-o'-war-man's cap, the crown often encircled with

AN INTERRUPTED LESSON.

a wide fold of bright coloured velvet. Long lace veils suit the present hats, and there is every likelihood that the old kinds, worn by our grandmothers fifty years ago, will be coming in again.

This winter's materials and colours are so charming and so varied that they certainly ought to prove an incentive to dressmakers. Skirts remain so simple, that, try as we will, it would seem to be impossible to introduce any novelty, and consequently all the ideas are centred in the bodice. The points that are new in the skirts are invisible, still they exercise a potent influence. We are quickly banishing all foundations, but this in no way diminishes the cost of the gown, which, to be in the fashion, should be lined throughout with silk, and have a silk balayeuse. Gowns hang much better with this treatment. The great object of the dressmaker is to produce as much width at the feet as is consistent with the upper portion below the waist, which should fit almost as closely as a glove. To effect this, the fulness is cut away and the material gored and pleated to the natural outline of the figure. The cross cut seam joining down the centre of the back gives a fan-shaped aspect to the train. This just touches the ground, and, when desired, can be easily held up, as the rest of the skirt being of a walking length, without foundation, it is absolutely only necessary to curtail the length of the centre of the train when walking. These remarks apply to both the gowns in our illustration. In one figure the skirt is bordered with rich deep embroidery, headed by a couple of rouleaux, the same class of embroidery appears again on the long tab basque, on the front of the turn-down collar, and on the cuffs of the sleeves, which are tight to the elbow and then form one long puff to the shoulder. This bodice is full from the neck to the slightly defined point, which appears to be tied in the centre with cord. Waist frills have gone out, and bodices either end at the waist or have a basque joined on to them at the waist line.

In the second figure the back of the skirt is sewn on to the bodice at the waist. This fabric is brocaded and has a band of velvet carried round the hem, the entire dress being blue, which I am inclined to think, although many colours have come to the fore, is, in truth, the most fashionable, whether it be navy blue or a dark tone of a powder hue, which is newer and certainly brighter. It is the tint of the "blue" compound used in washing. The front of this gown appears to be cut in one from the neck to the hem ; the junction is really hidden by one of the many bands of velvet carried up only a few inches apart horizontally the entire length. The only other trimmings are the lozenge-shaped buttons, four on either side of the skirt and two on either side of the bodice, one on each sleeve, the cuffs being finished off with a double band of velvet. Other bands of velvet, carried from under the arm to the front, make the waist look small and the revers that end on the bust give width to the shoulders ; the collar is not unduly high and is finished off with a silk pleating. This is a satisfactory afternoon gown and might be worn on almost any occasion. The little child standing by her mother is dressed much like her elders. The model is in pink brocaded and plain woollen stuff, with a band of black velvet defining the yoke, or rather the division of the yoke in front from the rest of the full bodice, which is rather long in the waist, and finished off with a belt of black and pink ribbon. A band of fancy material is placed above the hem of the skirt matching the sleeves and yoke. This is a simple style, well suited to children, but they have also many extremely picturesque fashions just now. White corduroy is a favourite material for little cloaks and gowns, and one of the prettiest mantles I have seen was made of this, falling full from the shoulders, where was a yoke. A deep frill of Irish point bordered the shoulders, edging the yoke, and another frill formed the collar.

Little boys this winter for evening parties have been wearing coats and breeches of white corduroy, the coat cut in the same fashion as the jacket of the Dauphin of France, Louis XVI.'s unfortunate little son. Under this is a soft silk shirt with turned-down collar, edged with a frill, carried also down the large centre pleat. It looks very pretty in navy blue with a red jacket. White, however, is best suited to children, and the new white felt hats, edged with a band of ostrich feathers and trimmed with a triple pompon, are becoming to them. A newer trimming for hats is made up of a series of loops of ribbon which take the place of the feather borders and do not so easily get out of order. They stand the atmospheric changes better. White tricorn hats trimmed with beaver are novel.

II.—FROM OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.

JANUARY opening with *Jour de l'an* is a period in the year when Paris is seen at its best. Present-giving creates an impetus for many new ideas in knick-knacks, *bijouterie*, and other adjuncts of sunny lives.

I want you to have a just idea of the dresses now worn in the French capital. The Princess gown and the polonaise would seem to have shaken hands. Neither one nor the other has returned to us in its entirety ; separately, they have had no great success ; together, they are among the prettiest modes of the day. The first figure in our picture gives a favourable impression of this particular style of dress. The model from which it was taken was a soft, camel's hair vicuna of the new pinky violet tone, which is neither red, heliotrope, nor petunia, but a charming combination of the three. The dress shows no fastenings, but crosses in the same fashion as the habits worn by Turkish men. It overwraps from the left shoulder to the right side, opening to the feet to display a rounded fold formed of mouse-coloured velvet. The edges are bordered with a waved line of black and gold braid. This is carried round the throat and the shoulders, crosses the bodice, borders the side panels, and gives substance to the hem. Special attention should be directed to the make of the sleeves for they illustrate a leading idea in current fashion. There is a close-fitting undersleeve to the wrist ; the oversleeve falling below the elbow is simply a full piece of material edged like the rest of the gown. This idea,

which is really a full all-round oversleeve, finds its way to mantles, jackets, and tea-gowns, as well as to many other kinds of dresses.

The other figure wears the inevitable long basqued coat which most women affect who have not adopted the Princess style. Before selecting this make, the figure of the wearer should be considered, for these basques, if not the proper length, diminish your apparent height. The dress is made in a light tobacco brown, a shade which has been particularly popular with Parisians all through the winter. It is trimmed with some of the new silver embroidery worked on cloth. This coat bodice is cut in one with the basque. One side of the front is full, the other fastens over it with one revers. The little hat is of the paysanne form, trimmed with ribbon, ruched round the crown and forming a bow in front. Like most of the prettiest hats of the day, it has strings which are tied under the chin—for we can no longer distinguish a hat from a bonnet by the presence or absence of strings.

AN AMUSING TALE.

The favour with which everything Russian is now regarded in Paris, has given a great impetus to the fur trade, and many inexpensive skins are dyed in the hope of their being mistaken for their more costly fellows. It is not every woman who can afford sable, or even Thibet goat, but the latter is so much in favour now, that it is dyed in various colours to match the brocades with which it is worn. Charming opera cloaks of light and delicate brocade have been lined with this tinted fur, which is visible here in the large roll collar. Those who have any chinchilla laid by should bring it to the light, for it is one of the favourite trimmings of the season applied to several tones of grey. Mink and various kinds of fox fur, including the pretty blue fox, are fashionable. French people have never shown the same favour as regards sealskins as Englishwomen ; but a few of the new Mexican seal coats have been recently imported and sold well. They are much cheaper, and look fairly well, but are easily spoilt by the rain. A few of the extremely elegant Parisiennes are having their dresses made after the idea of the Russian habit of past centuries, but this is too extreme a development to be likely to find its way to England. I am told that English dressmakers when they come over here in search of fashions, frequently take back with them only the Russian names, which they attach to less fantastic raiment.

Corselets of velvet and of handsome guipure are introduced on many morning and evening dresses. Black gossamer fabrics worked with gold, are often made with simple skirts edged with a frill, amid which velvet roses nestle in various colourings, while on the bodice there is a corselet of velvet that matches the richest tone of the roses.

Bodices are worn low for evening, but are brought up high on the shoulders and very frequently the sleeves reach just above the elbow, where they are quite narrow, but widen upwards towards the shoulder. Chiffon, crêpe de Chine, and many kinds of soft materials, are used for folds and draperies which rest on the skin, softening the effect considerably. Balls of ribbon, made up after the fashion of a rosette, frequently hang like a chatelaine from the waist, and, like a footman's tags, from the shoulders. Dark fur is frequently carried up the fronts and sides, or round the hem of light coloured evening gowns.

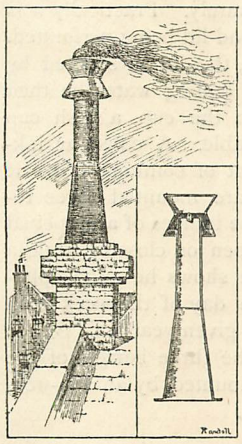
Many of the bodices, both high and low, are trimmed to resemble one dress over another, the upper one being carried over one shoulder and under the opposite arm. This is very graceful, but requires some skill in its arrangement. Many sleeves are made of a distinct material to the bodice and generally of a contrasting colour, which suggests a capital way of furbishing up a last year's gown, a task which is now by no means so difficult as it has been of late years.

THE GATHERER:

AN ILLUSTRATED RECORD OF INVENTION, DISCOVERY, LITERATURE, AND SCIENCE.

Correspondents are requested, when applying to the Editor for the names and addresses of the persons from whom further particulars respecting the articles in the GATHERER may be obtained, to forward a stamped and addressed envelope for reply, and in the case of inventors submitting specimens for notice, to prepay the carriage. The Editor cannot in any case guarantee absolute certainty of information, nor can he pledge himself to notice every article or work submitted.

A New Chimney-Pot.



A really good chimney-pot for the cure of smoky vents is a desideratum. That called the "Venetian" has many points in its favour, and is well worthy of the attention of builders and householders. It has none of the objectionable features of the cowl. It does not revolve or creak, it is quite open to the sweeper's broom, and it presents a neat appearance. As shown in the accompanying section, it consists of two cones, the lower tapering and creating the up-draught, the upper inverted over the lower, and deflecting the wind upwards instead of downwards, thus preventing gusts of smoke. The slope of the upper cone is such that a wind striking its inner surface at an angle not exceeding 36° with the horizontal is deflected upwards and outwards. The total height of the new chimney-pot is 4 ft. 6 in., and it is made in galvanised iron, zinc, terra-cotta, clay, or other material.

Rathite.

Bicycle tyres and railway buffers of pure india-rubber are too soft, and hence a new compound termed "rathite" has been introduced. It is a compound of vulcanised rubber and silk fibre in a finely divided state, and is said to combine toughness with durability.

Ammonite.

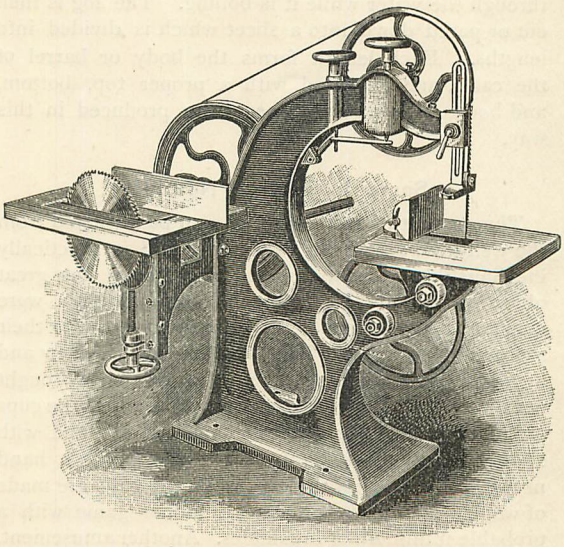
The new explosive called ammonite is intended to prevent explosions in collieries, and consists of pure ammonium nitrate and nitro-naphthaline, which, after being dried and ground, are mixed at a moderate heat. The result is a yellow powder, which is made into cartridges. It is more powerful than dynamite, a charge of five grammes projecting a shot of twenty-nine lb. from a mortar to a distance of 320 yards, whereas the same quantity of dynamite only sent it 289 yards, while an equal amount of gunpowder only carried it 136 yards. It does not explode under concussion, and is quite safe in handling and transport so long as it is not detonated in the regular way.

Invisible Writing.

Sympathetic inks are well-known, but a recent discovery of Professor Bruylauts of the University of Louvain surpasses them, inasmuch as no ink at all is required in order to convey a secret message. He lays several sheets of note-paper on each other, and writes on the uppermost with a pencil, then selects one of the under sheets on which no marks of the writing are visible. On exposing this sheet to the vapour of iodine for a few minutes, it turns yellowish, and the writing appears of a violet-brown colour. On further moistening the paper it turns blue, and the letters show in violet lines. The explanation is that note-paper contains starch, which, under pressure, becomes hydramide and turns blue in the iodine fumes. It is best to write on a hard desk, say a pane of glass. Sulphurous acid gas can make the writing disappear again, and it can be revived a second time.

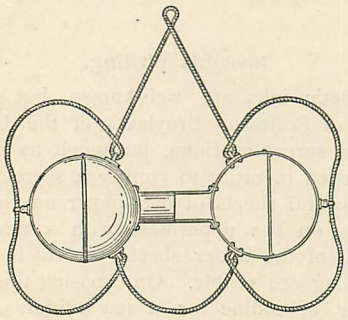
A Band and Circular Saw.

The machine shown in our woodcut is a combined circular and band saw for the use of wood workers of all kinds. The band saw which is seen on the right will cut straight, irregular, or curving lines, and the table may be canted to any angle for bevel-cutting. This saw can also be fitted with a "fence" for cutting



tenons. Provision is made for the expansion and contraction of the saw blade during the work. The circular saw has a "rise and fall table" for sawing, rebating, and grooving, so that there is no need to alter the length of the shelf connecting the saw to the motor. These saws are made both for hand and engine power.

A Copper Life-buoy.



The life-saving appliance illustrated in the figure is a hollow, copper dumb-bell, which acts as a float, and to which the becket-lines are attached in loops. The right half of the figure shows the buoy in section, and the stiffening partition inside the bell. As the connecting bar is also hollow, there are five water-tight compartments in the apparatus. The buoy has only one-third the weight of an ordinary one, and it can be thrown more easily. We may add that it has been sanctioned by the Board of Trade.

Casks without Staves.

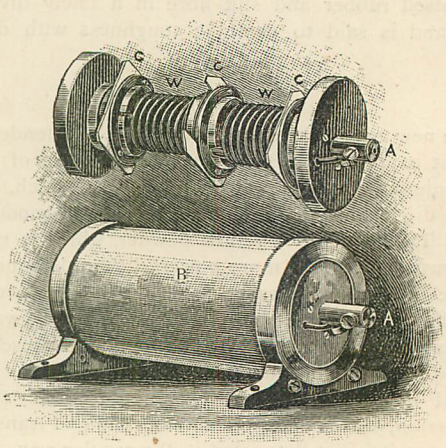
The body of barrels is now made in one piece cut from the tree, so that there is only one joint in the whole. The tree trunk is first sawn into lengths which are boiled for three hours in a closed vessel and thus softened. A current of electricity is also passed through the water while it is boiling. The log is then cut or pared down into a sheet which is divided into lengths. Each length forms the body or barrel of the cask, and is fitted with a proper top, bottom, and hoops. Some fine veneers are produced in this way.

Some Interesting Novelties.

The amount of exercise which can be extracted from the well-known game of "cup and ball" is practically inexhaustible. But there has always been one great objection against the game hitherto—children were constantly doing damage, either to their person or their surroundings, with the hard wooden balls. A new and hygienic variant of the old game has now been brought out under the title of "the Dorothy," in which the cups are much larger than was customary of old, and with shorter handles, so as to bring the player's hand nearer to the bowl of the cup, while the balls are made of wool. The result is a capital indoor game with a probable minimum of breakages. Another amusement, which, at the same time, affords occupation for little fingers and an opportunity of imparting instruction, is to be found in the washable "Natural History Pictures," recently introduced, and which are to be stitched carefully on to Turkey twill or any other washing material. In the course of this work, and the subsequent making-up of the pictures thus mounted into cot-quilts, nursery curtains, or table-cloths, it would be at once natural and easy to say a few words about the animal whose picture was being outlined or mounted, and little ones may thus be taught natural history as well as needlework. "The Teaette" is the name given to a new utensil for the making of a single cup of tea quickly and purely. Practically it is a spoon with a lid, both bowl and lid being perforated. The tea is placed in the bowl, the lid is secured by means of a sliding ring, and if boiling water be then poured upon the "teaette" in the cup, a fresh cup of tea would be quickly available. A calendar inkstand is one of the most recent of combinations. It consists of a case, in which are mounted three revolving barrels that serve as the indices of a perpetual calendar, whether the box is open or closed; while a chart on the back of the case shows how the apparatus may be used to find the day of the week upon which any particular day in a given year fell. When the box is opened each of the three barrels of the calendar is found to be surmounted by an ink-well, for black, red, and copying ink.

A Lightning Guard for Electric Installations.

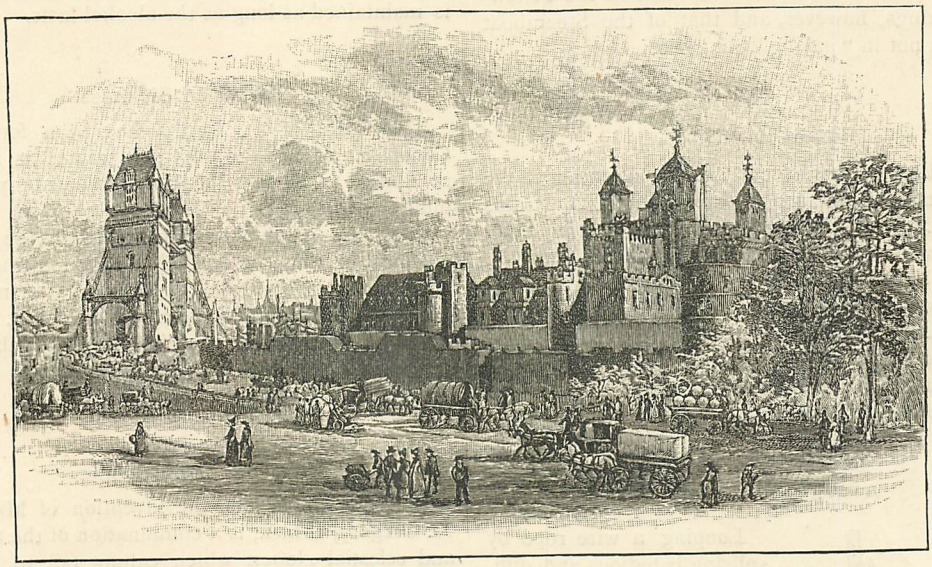
Dr. Oliver Lodge, F.R.S., has designed a little apparatus to protect electric light installations from lightning. It is illustrated in the figure, and consists of a cylindrical barrel, B, through which the current passes by the axis, A, and two coils of thick wire, W, W. At equal intervals in the circuit of this wire are three pairs of brass collars, C, C, C, having squares of mica, coated with tinfoil, between them. The corners of the foils come near to the metal barrel or case of the apparatus, which is connected to the earth. Should lightning enter the coil, it will leak away or branch off by the tinfoils and escape to the ground.



We understand that Major Cardew has tested this protector in the laboratory of the Board of Trade and found it satisfactory.

The Tower Bridge.

This remarkable structure, which, it is expected, will be finished next year, was begun by the Corporation of the City of London on June 21st, 1886, the Prince of Wales laying the foundation-stone. The Thames at this point is 880 feet wide, and the bridge consists of three spans, namely, a central of 200 feet, and two side ones of 270 feet each, which, together with piers and approaches, brings its total length to 2,640 feet. To allow of ships going up and down, the central span is built on the *bascule* or drawbridge principle —the two halves of the spans being hinged at the piers, and capable of being raised into a vertical position, then lowered into the horizontal position after the vessel has passed through. This arrangement will only stop the vehicular traffic from time to time. The foot passengers will cross the river by a lighter bridge, raised to a height of 135 feet above the river on the lofty middle piers. The shore spans are devised on the suspension principle, and the central span will consist of iron girders; while the piers are built of grey granite, and the upper parts of the middle towers of red brick, with stone facings. The working of the drawbridge will be effected by hydraulic power—all the engines being duplicated in case of a breakdown. It is expected that about two dozen ships will pass the bridge daily, each occupying five minutes, but, as most of these will come "on the top of the tide," there will be long intervals of closure. The roadway is sixty feet wide, narrowing to fifty feet at the middle span, and the gradients are nowhere steeper than a rise of one foot in forty feet—that is to say, the slopes are flatter than those of London Bridge. The architect of the work is Mr. Horace Jones, and the engineer is Mr. John Wolfe Barry.



THE TOWER BRIDGE AS IT IS EXPECTED TO APPEAR WHEN FINISHED.

Hidden Energy of Ether.

Scientists of the newer school are coming to regard the luminiferous ether which pervades the material universe, and is the known vehicle of light, as well as of electric and magnetic induction, as an illimitable and inexhaustible reservoir of energy, which is ordinarily concealed from our senses, but can be guessed at from the power of a lightning stroke or an explosion. In fact, we seem to be living in the midst of the most violent and disruptive forces, which, nevertheless, appear to have no existence because they are so finely balanced. Mr. S. Tolver Preston, an able thinker in this field, has recently calculated that every cubic foot of ether contains within itself 10,700 foot-tons of energy, that is to say, it is capable of lifting a ton to the height of 10,700 feet, or more than twice the altitude of Ben Nevis. The energy stored in $2\frac{1}{2}$ cubic feet of ether is equivalent to that of an express train weighing 300 tons and running at a speed of 60 miles an hour. The pressure exerted on matter by the ether surrounding and bathing it is, he estimates, no less than 500 tons on the square inch.

Aërated Milk.

Milk separated from its fat or butter and aërated with carbonic anhydride by Crampton's process is recommended by the medical faculty for invalids whose digestive powers are unable to assimilate it in its natural state. The milk for treatment in a separator is placed in siphon bottles and the gas is forced in at a pressure of eighty pounds to the square inch. It is drawn off for use like soda-water.

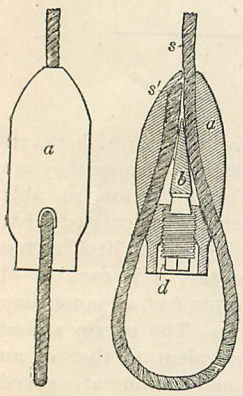
Spring Water Gold.

The famous Mount Morgan gold mine in Queensland, which has been so profitable turns out to be a geological curiosity. The gold appears in a silicious sinter which covers the slopes and forms the core of a hill. The sinter has been deposited from a hot mineral spring in the course of ages, and the gold is found in deposits of brown ironstone or hematite occurring in the sinter. According to a recent analysis by Mr. W. H. Weed, of the United States Geological Survey, the sinter is a pure form of opal, like that of the Yellowstone Park, and the auriferous hematite, also deposited from the ancient spring, by cooling of the overflow, is like that of the Steamboat Springs of Nevada. Gold does not seem to occur in the Yellowstone Springs, however, and that of the Steamboat Springs is not in "paying" quantities.

Trains and Birds.

Mr. Pilkington has recently drawn attention to the destruction of birds and insects by railway trains in motion. The front of a locomotive is frequently covered with dead insects and stained with the blood of birds which have been flying across the line. Grouse and partridges, startled by the noise are often sufferers from this cause, being either killed or maimed. Mr. Pilkington once saw a fine grouse lying wounded on a locomotive where it remained during 100 miles of the journey.

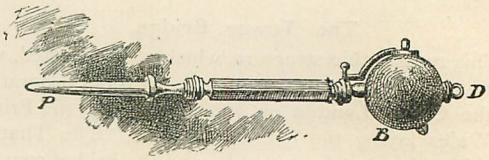
A Wire-rope Holder.



Looping a wire rope by splicing is tedious and difficult, hence the device which we illustrate. By its means a loop can be made in a few minutes by an unskilled workman. The holder is a cast-iron block, A, with four holes in it, the rope, S, being passed through the block and out by one of the holes. The end is then bent round to form the loop, and passed through the other side hole, then out at the top. A cast-iron wedge, B, fills up the tapering space, and is driven home by a screwed plug, D, thereby gripping the rope so tightly that it cannot be drawn out. To prevent the rope from wearing, the inside of the block is lined with galvanised iron, which can be renewed when worn through.

A New Cautery.

A permanent thermo-cautery, recently described to the French Academy of Sciences, is illustrated in the figure. It consists of a spherical boiler B, into which is introduced a quantity of alcohol by the stopper D. The vapour of the alcohol, mingled with



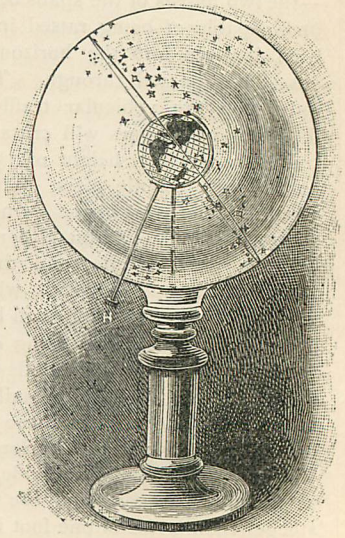
air, passes by internal tubes to a ribbon of incandescent platinum, which heats the point P of the cautery. The apparatus can be used with one hand, and the heat is maintained as long as the alcohol lasts.

Music in Sickness.

The Guild of St. Cecilia has been founded by Canon Harford to apply soft music as a remedy in illness to soothe the mind, alleviate pain, and induce sleep. Tests will be made of its power in various cases by musicians provided for the purpose; a central hall is to be erected in London where music of a high class will be audible day and night, and records will be kept of the results achieved. Already the work of sending musicians to hospitals and infirmaries has begun, and the scheme has met with distinguished approval.

The Geodoscope.

This new apparatus, the invention of Miss Annie M. Gregory, L.L.A., is a combination of the terrestrial and celestial globes, which cannot fail to be useful in schools and colleges. The merit of the device consists in surrounding the terrestrial globe with a celestial globe of glass, marked with the principal stars, the signs of the zodiac, the ecliptic, celestial equator, and the tropics. The earth is rotated by means of a handle, H, projecting through this crystal shell, and all its phases are visible to the eye. The earth is a three-inch globe, the heavens a twelve-inch globe. A cylindrical beam of light reflected from a hand lantern represents the sun, and by its rays falling on the earth gives a perfect illustration of the day and night throughout the year.



A Deck-seat Lifeboat.

A combined lifeboat and deck-seat which attracted a good deal of notice at the Naval Exhibition, is represented in the accompanying woodcuts, of which Fig. 1 is a plan, and Fig. 2 a longitudinal section. The lifeboat is 20 feet long, 5 feet in beam, 2 feet deep, and

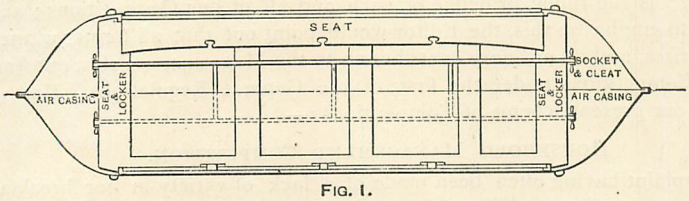


FIG. 1.

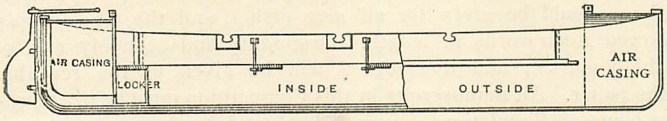


FIG. 2.

capable of holding 15 persons. Air-casings are provided at each end and along the sides, to give the required buoyancy ; the bottom is flat, and fitted with side-keels.

Gift Books and Others.

A little time ago we heard the complaint made that "Robinson Crusoe" was *too long!* But the critic had passed his boyhood, and must have formed his heterodox opinion before their new fine-art edition of Defoe's undying work was published by Messrs. Cassell. It is issued at a price which makes it generally available as a gift-book or prize, and it is profusely and carefully illustrated by Mr. Walter Paget, whose work is familiar to all readers of "CASSELL'S MAGAZINE" in connection with our current serial story, "Out of the Fashion." To run through this handsome volume is sufficient to bring back to recollection half-forgotten incidents of the story, that is so old but yet so perennially fresh. From "Robinson Crusoe" to a new encyclopædia is a long cry, but we have before us the first volume of one issued by the same publishers, handy in form and yet comprehensive in scope. It is "Cassell's Storehouse of Information" which promises to be fitted for general reference and yet not to be either bulky or expensive. The articles are not always short, and they are so fully illustrated that the work ought to meet all ordinary demands, seeing that it is at once accurate, and brought down to date. The sixth volume of Cassell's "New Popular Educator" fully sustains the reputation which its predecessors have made for the work. This edition, so thoroughly revised and re-written, is a vast improvement on its useful forerunners.

Fairy Tales from the Greek.

Mrs. Edmonds, who has translated the "Stories from Fairyland" to make a volume of Mr. Fisher Unwin's quaintly-dressed Children's Library, speaks almost apologetically in her preface of any association of the word "Fairy" with Greek tales, inasmuch as fairies, as we know them, are strangers to the Greeks. But a "fairy tale" without fairies, paradoxical though it may sound, is hardly a novelty among more northern folk, and these stories, translated from Drosines and Kourtidos, well deserve inclusion in this admirable series. There is something at once pleasing and fresh about them that will commend the tales to all readers, old and young alike.

"The Great Commoner."

When an ex-Foreign Secretary writes of a former Premier, the ordinary reader feels that the work is, at any rate, in the hands of a man who is bound to be fully alive to all the influences which play upon a statesman in and out of office. The Earl of Rosebery's contribution to the series of "Twelve English Statesmen," edited by Mr. John Morley, for Messrs. Macmillan, is a sketch of William Pitt's career that is highly creditable to the author and to the memory of the great man of whom he writes. The life-story of the man who held supreme power in England when the events of the American War of Secession still exercised a potent influence on English politics ; who held the helm in the storm that followed the French Revolution, and through the troublous times of the first war with Napoleon, the Irish Rebellion, and the passing of the Act of Union, has yet to be told. In the compass of a volume of less than 300 pages Lord Rosebery cannot, of course, be expected to supply this undoubted want, for which, as he points out, the time will not come until at least the State papers of Pitt's day are published. But of Pitt the man—apart, to a large extent, from his policy and its causes—Lord Rosebery presents a most admirable study. When all the streams of Pitt's policy and the tendencies of his statecraft have passed from the domain of politics to that of history—and that day is not yet—we shall be better able to judge of Pitt, the statesman, as he really was. Pure, earnest, strong, and full of faith in his country, Lord Rosebery shows him to us.

"Pleasant Work for Busy Fingers."

This is a work at once practical and entertaining. It gives full directions for quite a host of indoor amusements and occupations that are suited for little fingers. Paper-folding and cutting, paper-pricking and sewing, and beadwork are only representative of the different classes of pastimes that Miss Maggie Browne, the author, treats of. She gives as a sub-title to her work "Kinder-Garten At Home" and a happier description of her well-illustrated volume it would be impossible to find. Parents owe the author and publishers (Cassell & Co.) a considerable debt of gratitude for this volume.

NEW PRIZE COMPETITIONS.

OPEN TO ALL READERS OF "CASSELL'S MAGAZINE."

LAST year's Short Story Competition proved an unqualified success, and the Editor feels every confidence in inviting the competitors and others who are interested in the Magazine and in literary work to enter the lists again. "A fair field and no favour" is the ruling principle of each and all of our Competitions; and, in order to emphasize this, the Editor would point out that all former winners of *first* prizes, and all ordinary contributors to the Magazine, are shut out from similar Competitions under the first of the General Regulations. Here is set forth our present scheme of Competitions :—

HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT COMPETITION.

Complaint having often been made of a lack of variety in our breakfast tables, we offer a PRIZE of FIVE GUINEAS for the best and most varied bill of fare for breakfast, for a family of six, on every day of the month of September. Practical recipes should be given for all *new* dishes, and the whole paper should not exceed 4,000 words in length. Originality and economy will, of course, earn high marks; and due regard will be given to the readable character of the paper. All manuscripts in this Competition must be in accordance with the General Regulations (given below), and be in our hands not later than April 15th, 1892.

THREE-PART ADVENTURE STORY COMPETITION.

THREE PRIZES of TWENTY POUNDS, FIFTEEN POUNDS, and TEN POUNDS respectively, are offered for the best, second-, and third-best original STORIES OF ADVENTURE—stories, that is, in which the interest is concentrated rather on the action, or incidents, than on the characters. Each story must be divided into three parts, each consisting of not less than 5,000, or more than 6,000 words, and must be suitable for use in this Magazine. Every manuscript must be accompanied by a short outline (about 500 words in length) of its plot, and also by a plan showing how the plot is developed in each of the three parts of the story. All MSS. in this Competition must be in accordance with the General Regulations (see below), and be in our hands not later than June 1st, 1892.

FOUR-PART STORY COMPETITION.

THREE PRIZES of FORTY POUNDS, THIRTY POUNDS, and TWENTY POUNDS respectively, are offered for the best, second-, and third-best Stories of Domestic Interest—bright, original, adapted for family reading, and for use in this Magazine. Each story must be divided into four parts, of not less than 9,000, or more than 10,000 words, each. Every manuscript must be accompanied by a short outline (about 500 words in length) of its plot, and also by a plan showing how the plot is developed in each of the four parts of the story. All manuscripts in this Competition must be in accordance with the General Regulations (given below), and be in our hands not later than September 1st, 1892.

The following are the GENERAL REGULATIONS under which these Prizes are offered :—

1. Every reader of the Magazine (not being an ordinary contributor to its pages, or the winner of the first prize in a former competition, of the same nature, in connection with this Magazine) is eligible to enter any competition.

2. The Editor cannot undertake to answer inquiries having reference to the treatment of manuscripts in detail. *The particulars given are sufficient for the purposes of the competition, and everything else is left to the judgment and discretion of the competitors.*

3. All communications regarding MSS. entered for any one of the above competitions must be sent in the same packets with the MSS. No previous or subsequent communications (except under Rule 7) can receive any consideration. The award of the judges will be published in the Magazine as soon after the close of each competition as possible, and no information respecting the award will be given to any competitor before this publication.

4. Each MS. must have inscribed on it, or otherwise securely attached to it, the name and postal address of the author, together with a declaration *that the work is original and entirely the sender's own*, to be signed by the author and countersigned by some other trustworthy person—*i.e.*, a magistrate, minister of religion, or householder—with the postal address in both cases.

5. The copyright of the prize work, or works, will become the property of the proprietors of this Magazine.

6. Should two MSS. be, in the opinion of the judges, of equal merit, any prizes may be divided between their authors at the discretion of the Editor. Any, or all, of the prizes may be withheld in the event of no MSS. being thought by the judges to be worthy of distinction.

7. All packets containing MSS. should be prepaid. The Editor will not be liable for loss or miscarriage of any work. Unsuccessful competitors may have their MSS. returned to them at their own risk, upon application to the Editor, *after the publication of the award* in the competition for which they are entered. Any such application must be accompanied by stamps to defray the cost of carriage. (Competitors should *not* send stamps, or instructions for return, *with their MSS.*, as no notice can be taken of any communications of this nature, made before the award is published.)

8. All MSS. must reach the Editor on or before the date named above as the receiving day in each competition, and should be addressed—The Editor of CASSELL'S MAGAZINE, La Belle Sauvage, London, E.C. Each packet should bear on the top left-hand corner of the envelope or wrapper in which it is enclosed the title, as given above, of the particular competition for which it is entered.

(*Drawn by* Percy Tarrant.)

THE LADY OF THE MANOR.—I. FIRST ACQUAINTANCE.

"YOU'LL LOVE ME YET."

By FRANCES HASWELL.

> You'll love me yet, and I can tarry
> Your love's protracted growing;
> June reared the bunch of flowers you carry
> From seeds of April's sowing."—Browning.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

A LOST EDEN.

THUS it was decided that the engagement should be a very short one, only a month; and it so happened that Lancelot was not able to spend much of the time at Winston, for several matters at home required his attention, while Sylvia told him plainly besides that she had a great deal to do in making her own preparations, and had small leisure to bestow upon him. When they were together, she so contrived things that *tête-à-têtes* should be few and far between; and Lancelot, having no experience in "affairs of the heart," set down her cold manners to maidenly coyness. He sometimes regretted the merry Sylvia of old days; this properly-behaved young lady was very different from the girl he had lost his heart to; but still he had no suspicion of the real nature of her feelings.

"I remember," thought he, smiling to himself, "how, when I was a very little boy, I used to pull up the radishes in the garden, to see if they were big enough to eat, till one day old Matthew complained that he found the radish-bed full of withered radishes. If I'm too impatient now, if I keep on questioning Sylvia whether her love is growing, perhaps I shall harm something more precious than the radishes."

To Sylvia the days seemed to pass all too quickly, till a certain July morning when all the world looked glorious with flowers and sunshine, as if to mock the unfortunate girl's misery. What a contrast between this and the marriage-day of her maiden dreams! She made a great effort; she forced down all emotion, talked gaily about the presents that came in, feigned an interest in the wedding-gown (which, by Lancelot's particular desire, was made of the lavender silk that had been his first present to her) and walked up the church aisle at last, feeling like a figure on the stage. She was aware that the village church was crowded with onlookers; she recognised familiar faces, had leisure to notice that Angela looked as pretty as ever in some soft creamy material, and even took stock of the half-amused look on Mr. Lowndes' handsome face; they were all wondering, she supposed, what strange delusion had taken possession of Sylvia Hornby, what spell could have won anybody to marry Lancelot Bassett. She would have been very sorry for Lancelot, if he had not seemed so well satisfied with his own lot; men were less particular than women, that was clear, for Sylvia would have *hated* (so she had often told herself vehemently enough) to marry any man who did not love her, and though Lancelot chose to talk as if she returned his love, yet of course it was absurd to imagine that he could really blind himself. She at least had not deceived him, though if he liked to amuse himself by playing at the game of mutual love, it were ungracious, as well as needless, to protest at every turn.

Our heroine had leisure for all these thoughts and more, as she passed up to the chancel step, where the bridegroom awaited her, and stood listening to the choir singing the wedding hymn. She kept her eyes fixed on her book, without so much as a glance at his face, till the vows were plighted; and then, though she had never entertained a thought of retreat, it did flash upon her all at once, with a kind of sickening terror, that henceforth no retreat was possible. The last good-byes were quickly said, for the "happy pair" were to set out on their honeymoon from the church door, and in a few minutes the strange new life was begun.

"Love-loyal to the least wish of his queen," and remembering the desire she had once expressed, Lancelot had proposed to spend the first week or two on the coast of North Devon, and she had tried to seem pleased and grateful, though reflecting with an inward pang how different it would all be from the thing she had planned and pictured.

Though the railway journey was not very long, yet to Sylvia it seemed interminable; they had a compartment to themselves, and her husband was full of exultation at finding her for the first time all his own. So any change was a relief; and she was glad enough to alight, at three o'clock that summer afternoon, on the platform at Minehead, the pretty little watering-place, where the railway ends, and the most easterly spur of Exmoor juts out into the sea. A short drive brought them to Porlock, and then, having engaged rooms at one of the most charming of west-country hostelries, Lancelot proposed a walk. With a kindly interest which hundreds of newly-married couples had not exhausted, the landlady watched them down the quaint village street, gay with flowers; the "pleasant-spoken young gentleman" seemed even fonder and prouder than bridegrooms generally were; and Sylvia's figure looked gracefully girlish in her pretty blue gown; for, with what Ethel would have called her usual recklessness, she had merely removed her

travelling cloak, and was exposing the delicate colour to be faded out of existence by the sea air and hot sun. Good Mrs. Jones wished them happiness as they disappeared round the corner.

Their way led down a winding country lane, under hedges luxuriant with creeping plants, and then up the almost precipitous slope of Bossington Beacon. Heated and breathless with climbing, Sylvia threw herself down at last on the short grass of a ridge that overhung the sea. Lancelot sat down beside her, and for a few minutes neither spoke. Around them lay a wonderful scene of mountain, wood, and water, all glittering in the July sunshine, but our *dramatis personæ* had small emotion to spare for the beauties of Nature. To Lancelot the glory of outward things only heightened the joy that filled his cup of life; to the misery at Sylvia's heart it only added one more pang.

"Isn't it delicious here?" said Lancelot at last; "I'm so glad we came up. Just look at the seagulls dipping in the water: don't they look as if they enjoyed themselves? And the white sails of the ships—and the grand hills on the other side of Porlock! We've got a splendid day for our marriage, haven't we, dear? And the sky promises fine weather to come. What shall we do to-morrow? Should you like to go up Dunkery, and see the place where they lighted the beacons in the old times?"

"Yes," said Sylvia, perceiving that this was the answer expected of her.

Her real thought, had she expressed it, was that rain or fine, picturesque country or tame, were alike indifferent to her at the present moment. They were close to the edge of the cliff. If she could but roll over and bury that ruined life of hers in the "deep, deep sea"!

"It seems almost too beautiful to be true!" Lancelot went on; "I don't mean the scenery," he added, smiling, "but to remember that I shall have you now day after day, all to myself, wandering through these lovely places, and making them all a thousand times more beautiful by your presence. But I want you to give me one more joy that I've never had yet; I do think you might—to-day of all days, Sylvia!—just say, 'Lancelot, I love you a little.' I don't believe you've ever called me 'Lancelot!'"

"I'm very sorry," said Sylvia, not with the coyness of a bride, but with steadfast solemnity; "I want to do all I can to please you, for you've been very kind, and I'm awfully grateful to you. But I can't say that; please don't be vexed; I'm very sorry, but I can't."

Lancelot's countenance fell.

"I thought, dear—I did think—well, never mind, I don't want to press you, if you had rather not. It makes no real difference, of course; still it would have been very sweet to hear you say it. But look here, I've thought of something; do you remember the game we played in the greenhouse, and at Allerton? We called it a game. Each of us asks the other a question, and the other is bound to answer. Come, you may have the first turn."

"I've nothing to ask."

Lancelot looked disappointed.

"I wish you had. I wish there was something you wanted to know about me. Because there are such *lots* of things I should like to know about you. Now, Sylvia, do you think—I don't quite know how to put it, but you're going to tell me the exact truth, mind—well, I want you to say just how much love you do really feel for me?"

He fixed his eyes on her face with intense earnestness, as if he would drag the truth out of her inmost soul.

"I suppose he thinks I'm bound to love him—or say that I love him at any rate—now that I'm his wife," said Sylvia to herself. "I ought to try, I know, and I'll begin to try some time; but I don't feel as if I could begin just yet. I've no strength for anything except just to endure. But there's no need to spoil his pleasure to-day by speaking *very* plainly."

So she replied—

"I think you know that I can't feel in the same way as you do; please forgive me; I'll try to make you happy."

"No; I don't expect you to love me as I love you. But I want you to love me as much as ever you can. Oh! I wish you could see into my heart!" His arm was already round her waist, and drawing her closer to him, he once more looked intently into her face.

"Oh, my dear love, my wife!" said he, "won't you just give me a kiss, and say, 'Lancelot, I love you a very little bit?' You've never kissed me, Sylvia!"

It was too much! Poor Sylvia's over-wrought nerves could endure no more; and, losing all self-control, she freed herself by a sudden effort from his grasp.

"No, I won't call you 'Lancelot'!" she cried, almost fiercely. "And I don't think you're one bit of a courteous knight; because, if you were, you'd understand that it's bad enough to—I mean to say that I've married you, and that might surely be enough, without being teased to tell lies into the bargain!"

All the colour fled from Lancelot's face.

"I don't know what you mean," he stammered. "I'm very sorry to have offended you. I didn't mean to tease you; I didn't know I was giving you pain. But—but—Sylvia—you *must* tell me one thing now; you must tell me that you didn't really mean what you began to say just then."

Sylvia was already ashamed of her outburst; yet it was just as well, she thought, to speak her mind plainly once for all.

"I don't know what *you* mean. I thought I had made you understand from the very beginning that I was very grateful to you, and I liked you—yes, and I admired you, and all that sort of thing—but that I *couldn't* love you. Surely you've known that all along; and so I can't help wondering how you can go on tormenting me in this way. Do be reasonable. Do let us be friends; and we might get on as well as we used to do ever so long ago. But don't you see that's impossible while you *will* torment me with love-making? You make me afraid of you."

"You never loved me at all? Why in the world have you married me, then?"

Sylvia was thunderstruck. What dreadful misunderstanding was here?

"You remember—you know—you said you would help me, if ever I was in trouble—and I was in trouble—I thought mother would die—and I sought about, and could see no other way of doing it—and I thought you quite understood. I didn't mean to deceive you. I never thought of deceiving you."

"But, Sylvia, I wouldn't have married you for anything, if I'd thought—I knew you didn't love me as I loved you; that wasn't likely, but I thought you had begun to love me, and it would go on growing. Oh, my darling, I can't give up that hope! You *must* have pity on me, you *must* love me a little, or I can't live at all."

He gave her a look of passionate entreaty that went to her heart, but what could she do?

"I'm awfully sorry, more sorry than I can say. But it's no use deceiving you—I *never* meant to deceive you—and I can't possibly love you in *that* way—so it's no good pretending."

It is hard for one who wakes out of a blissful dream to convince himself at first that the visionary happiness is altogether non-existent, and, in the same way, Lancelot felt as if there must be some strange mistake, as if it must be possible to convince Sylvia that it was a mistake. They had both risen to their feet, and once more, almost in despair, he threw his arms round her, and pressed her to him.

"Oh, my darling, my darling, my wife, this can't be true; I can't believe it! Just tell me it isn't quite true! Oh, Sylvia, I can be content with ever such a little grain of love; you must have *that* to give me—me who love you so!"

"How am I to make him understand?" thought Sylvia, "this is terrible! There can be no kindness in letting him go on fancying I'm in love with him; the longer he is in finding out the truth, the worse it will be for him—for he must know the truth some time. I couldn't live my whole life in a mask. Besides, I don't want to hate him, and I'm sure I shall hate him, if I have much more love-making to endure. If he could once put all this excitement out of his head, we might get on pretty comfortably. But I can't bear this kind of thing any longer. I must put the truth as strongly as I can."

"No," she said aloud, "no. I can't. It's no use thinking about it. Let me go, please let me go, don't hold me like this, you're hurting me. And I don't like to be kissed either, it makes me feel—oh, I can't tell you how it makes me feel—it turns me quite sick."

Without a word he let her go, and turned away, walking quickly down the same path by which they had climbed the beacon. Sylvia stood still, she could not run after him and unsay her words, though she felt she had gone too far, she had wounded his feelings so cruelly that he could never forgive her.

Well, she could not help it, she kept repeating to herself; it was not her fault if he had deluded himself, and those last words of hers had been spoken under an overmastering impulse. When he had disappeared round the corner of the rocks, she sat down once more on the grass — there seemed nothing else to do—and gazed out to seaward. It was not many minutes since her new-made husband had sat beside her on that bank; how happy he had been! and now she had destroyed all his happiness at one stroke. Her heart began to ache with pity.

"What will he do?" she wondered, "will he ever come back again? If he doesn't, what can I possibly do? But he'd never go away like that, he's not that kind of man, I know."

So she waited and waited, speculating on what Lancelot might be doing and thinking, wondering whether they could ever be friends again, or whether his love would now turn into hatred; she had read of such changes. His love had been a torment to her; but how ghastly it would be to find herself tied for life to a man who hated her! She hardly knew whether to dread most his coming back or his not coming. She watched for his figure in the green lanes far below, but she watched in vain. An hour must have passed away before she heard a tread on the pebbly path, and, turning quickly towards the rocks that hid the downward way, beheld her husband once more. His face was pale, the lips firmly set. As he seated himself on the grass a little way from her, she made an accidental movement, which he interpreted as a shrinking from him.

"Don't be afraid," he said, "I know better now. I'll not come near you any more. But I've something to say that must be said, Sylvia. We've made a mistake which can't be undone. Perhaps it was my own stupidity. But you remember our talk in Elderwood garden?—such a long time ago, it seems. After that, how could I suppose *you* would sell yourself? I thought you weren't that sort of woman, Sylvia."

She winced; but, before she could speak he went on:

"At all events, I didn't understand. And therefore I've spoiled your life. My own life's ruined too—if you can find any consolation in that. It's no use reproaching each other, however; we must just make up our minds what to do next. And I want to know what will be the least unpleasant to you. Tell me what you would prefer. Perhaps you would like to go home to Winston?"

"No," said Sylvia, in a low voice, as the image of her mother rose before her; "mother would think—oh no! it would make her so miserable!"

"Please understand me. I don't wish to keep you here against your will."

Never before had Sylvia found herself in such a miserably humiliating position. She had deluded Lancelot into marrying her on false pretences—unintentionally, it is true; still it appeared that he had been deluded; and now that he knew the truth, he plainly had no wish for her to remain with him. How could she force herself upon the man she had thus injured? yet how was it possible to leave him? how could she go home? It would almost kill her mother. She sprang to her feet in an agony of

perplexity; he rose also, and stood waiting for her to speak.

"Listen to me," she said; "I'm as sorry as I can be; you can't be more miserable than I am; I wish I was dead. I do indeed. And I see you think I've taken you in—cheated you into marrying me. But that's not fair; you've no right to think it; I wouldn't have done such a thing as that for the world. It was just like this. I thought, I thought—" she hesitated, coloured deeply, and then stumbled on desperately: "You said you wanted me to marry you, and I thought, if I did, it would please you, for I told you I didn't love you, and you still seemed quite satisfied, and I was hurting no one except myself, and it would be such a grand thing to be able to help mother and the rest. That's all, but it's not fair to say—anyhow it's not fair to think—I meant to behave badly to you!"

"I'm not reproaching you, and if I've said anything to offend you, I beg your pardon. But I want to know what you wish to do next?"

"Of course, I see now that I've made you miserable instead of happy; and so, of course, it's only right I should do exactly what *you* like best. Just tell me, please. Would you rather I went home to-night? I suppose it's not too late?"

"Yes, I'm afraid it is," said he, looking at his watch. "So you have no choice, I suppose?"

"I'll go to-morrow, if you wish it."

"If *I* wish it, Sylvia! You know very well that *I* don't wish it, only I can't ask you to stay with me, when my presence is so painful to you."

"No, no; I'll certainly stay, if you wish; but you made me think you wanted to get rid of me. Of course *I* prefer to stop here, on mother's account."

"But we must have a proper understanding. Is it your deliberate choice to go on living with me, and to keep up appearances before the world?"

"Yes, if you really don't mind," said she, looking down, for the mental image of Mrs. Hornby's pain was strong enough to overcome all the humiliation of her present position in Sylvia's heart.

"Then no one need ever know the truth except ourselves, and I won't trouble you more than I can help. We won't stay in Devonshire very long, and, when we go to Beverston, I needn't be much with you. Then, in the winter, you can go with your mother to the Riviera."

A touch of pathos, either in Lancelot's tone, or in the situation itself, impressed Sylvia so strongly, even in the midst of her own troubles, that she raised her eyes. There were lines in his face, it struck her, different from anything she had seen there before; it looked not only set, but older, and stronger. With the compassion, which she had often felt for him before, a kind of fear now mingled itself. Though he was some years her senior, she had always regarded him somewhat as a woman regards a boy; but he was a boy to her no longer; he was a man, a man whom she had wronged, moreover, and before whom she felt rebuked and humbled. She had been wanting to repeat her suggestion that they should return to their former comfortable friendship, but now it suddenly seemed impossible to adopt anything of the old patronising tone. This change of feeling did not take so long to pass as it does to write; for there was no noticeable pause before she answered:

"You are very good. I will do whatever you tell me."

"Very well. The thing's settled then. And it's time to go back to the inn."

Lancelot evidently regarded the conversation as closed, and it was not for Sylvia to re-open the subject. In almost unbroken silence they retraced their steps, and went through the form of dinner. It was a relief when Lancelot said:

"I'm going out for a long walk; I suppose you can make yourself tolerably comfortable here? I'll tell the landlady to light this fire, and there are some books, I see, on the side table, the 'Worthies of Devon,' illustrated, and two or three novels. Don't stay up for me, for I may be late in coming in, and you look tired."

"Thank you," said Sylvia, "don't trouble about me; I shall be all right."

The landlady came forthwith to kindle the fire; she seemed inclined to enter into conversation, but Sylvia had no wish to be "drawn out," and was glad enough to be left to herself again. She was beginning to feel shivery too; so, drawing up one of the old-fashioned arm-chairs as close to the tiny blaze as possible, she took up a book, a novel left behind by some former tourist, and tried to read. But she could not force herself to attend to the tale. She found her eye travelling unconsciously over the pages, while her thoughts were far away on Bossington Beacon, rehearsing the scene of the afternoon. Over and over again she listened to Lancelot's passionate words of love, winced under his reproaches, and noticed the change in his face; vividly, too, did she recall her own feelings at each turn of the conversation. She gave up the pretence of reading, and began to think what an irreparable failure she had made of her own life and her husband's; surely she was, of all women, the most pitiable! Her position had seemed as bad as it could be, before; but now, in addition to all the rest, she had lowered herself in Lancelot's eyes; he honoured her no longer; he despised her for selling herself to him. Selling herself! that was his phrase; that was the way he regarded her action; the recollection of those words made her hot and ashamed, and yet she must go on living with the man who had used them; there was no alternative that she could bear to contemplate.

"I wish," thought she, "I could do some grand, noble thing, to prove that I'm not the mercenary woman he thinks me; but what's the use of wishing? There's never a chance of doing anything great. Yes, I did think I was making a great sacrifice when I made up my mind to marry him—and this is the end of it! Oh, I wish I had never been born!"

The evening wore on, and the landlady brought in candles. Sylvia would not meet her eye, for she was wondering uncomfortably what Mrs. Jones thought about her; she devoutly hoped the good woman had

no suspicion that she was a bride. When the clock struck ten she went to bed, taking the book with her, for she did not expect to sleep. Sleep surprised her, however, for she was very tired, and she opened her eyes to see the daylight streaming in; the candle by the bedside had burned itself out, and her watch told her it was time to get up.

Things never look quite so dark in the morning as they do before one goes to bed, and yet Sylvia could not help wondering how she was ever to get through the long day. In the little sitting-room where breakfast was spread, she met Lancelot again, looking pale and inscrutable, at least to poor Sylvia, who longed to know what was passing in his mind, and what he was thinking of her. He came forward, however, and shook hands with her in the most unsentimental manner; plainly he had made up his mind to bury the past in oblivion.

"It's a beautiful day," he said, "just cool enough to make walking pleasant. I've been asking Mrs. Jones some questions, and I find we can send our things to Lynton by coach, walking ourselves along the cliffs. It's about twelve miles, they say; that won't be too much for you, will it?"

"Not a bit," said Sylvia readily, feeling considerably relieved by the change in Lancelot's manner; "I like walking. Do we go all the way along the coast?"

And so, by an effort, they managed to keep up conversation throughout the meal, without any too obvious gaps. Sylvia cast several furtive glances at her

"WHAT WILL HE DO?" SHE WONDERED, "WILL HE EVER COME BACK AGAIN?" (*p.* 131).

husband, but neither in his face nor his tone could she read what she wanted to read—his opinion of herself.

The freshness of morning still lingered in the air when they left the inn; a soft breeze was blowing off the water, and the dew was not dry in the little wood between the village and the sea. When they reached the glorious cliff path, buried in woods, with the blue sea below, Sylvia's expressions of delighted admiration made Lancelot smile.

"I'm glad," thought he, "that I can give her *some* pleasure after all, that her life with me is not unmixed pain."

And he strained all his faculties to make himself an agreeable companion. It was miserably uphill work at first to talk lightly on common subjects; but pain sometimes lends a man unnatural strength, and, whatever the reason might be, certain it is our hero had never talked so well in his life. He must have sat up all night, Sylvia thought, studying guide-books and county histories: for he knew all the legends, and all the antiquities, the plants, the rocks, the lore of red deer and stag-hunting; and he reproduced his stores of information with a *verve* (I can't find an English translation), which astonished, fascinated, and a little startled her. She had read about what philosophers call the conservation of force; it was evidently suppressed emotion of some kind which had transmuted itself into this unusual eloquence, as heat may be transmuted into electricity, and she longed to know the name of the passion which supplied the picturesque energy to Lancelot's descriptions, the dramatic fire to his narratives. Was it love, or anger, or scorn? She had no means of deciding.

But at least the long *tête-à-tête* walk which she had dreaded was not tedious. Sylvia, grateful for the effort her husband was making, did her part bravely to keep the ball rolling; and the weather was so delicious, the scenes so novel in their beauty, that, being blessed with the fine elasticity of youth, she felt her spirits gradually reviving. It was something to have reached the bottom of the precipice, after trembling so long on the brink; the restraint produced by the false relations of the past month was lifted off her; there was no unwelcome love-making to dread; every now and then, indeed, a bright look or a spirited expression of opinion would remind Lancelot of the old Sylvia he had lost.

They had the whole day before them, and there was no occasion to hurry; but Sylvia was beginning to feel just a little tired when they reached the top of the Lynmouth Foreland. A faint golden haze veiled the purple water; white sails of fishing-boats twinkled through the vapour, while the background was closed by the grand Castle Rock.

"Oh," cried she, forgetting fatigue, "how splendid! how glorious! I always loved the sea, but I never saw a sea like this before! I wish we could have sail. Couldn't we go in a boat to-morrow?"

"I dare say we could, if you're not afraid of being ill; those boats, you see, are rolling a good deal. You'd like to stay a few days at Lynton, and see the Doone Valley, I suppose?"

"I forgot the Doone Valley; oh! how often I have wanted to see that! We might go up there to-morrow, and sail the next day." Suddenly she recollected her position, and added, "But really, I don't mind much—I don't mind at all where we go. Please arrange exactly as you think best; you see I know really nothing about any of these places."

"You mustn't be so humble; didn't we come here just because you had wished so long to see Devonshire?" He checked himself abruptly, for he was treading on dangerous ground; it was necessary, above all things, to avoid personal topics, and he changed the subject to landscape painting in general, and sea-pictures in particular.

It was five in the afternoon when they reached the wooded valley of the Lynn. High above their heads towered precipitous slopes, green with oak-scrub, the stream foamed down among its rocks, and close by the water's edge an affectionate couple were sitting.

"Honeymooners!" said Sylvia.

Hardly had the word escaped her, when she bit her lip; how could she be so stupid?

"What possessed me to call attention to those people? He must think I have no feeling at all. I'm afraid what mother once said of me was true, 'It's a dreadful thing to see any woman so devoid of tact, Sylvia!'"

Those lovers haunted her, she could not forget them. Perhaps they had set Lancelot also thinking about "what might have been," for the rest of the walk passed almost in silence, and Sylvia's thoughts began to recur persistently to the miserable scene of yesterday. It might have been the afternoon light—so different from the light of morning—that made the past present once more.

"I said more than I need. And I'm afraid I didn't properly make him understand how dreadfully sorry and remorseful I am. I can never say it now; he'd shut me up with that calm, cold manner he has put on. If only yesterday could come over again, I could manage so differently!"

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

A DREAM OF LOVE.

Sylvia Bassett slept later than usual on the morning after arriving at Lynton; those long hours in the open air had made her drowsy. Just before waking, she had a strangely vivid dream—a dream that left its trace behind it, and therefore is worth relating.

She seemed to be walking with Lancelot in the beautiful woods by the Lynn; it was the same place they had passed through yesterday evening, but an indefinable change had come over everything. A glamour hung on hill and river, like the amber haze they had seen shimmering over the Channel. "Our differences are made up," she thought, only she longed to be sure that the past was all forgiven, and she was going to ask him, but the present was so sweet that she delayed her question, and, before it was asked, the vision faded. Her eyes opened once more to the cold "light of common day," but for a few

moments she lay still in that confusion of ideas which follows a life-like dream; she felt as if something wonderful and beautiful had happened, and it was some time before she could persuade herself of its unreality.

She got up and threw open the large window which looked on the glorious Atlantic blue, where the sun was glinting and sparkling on the dancing points of water.

"Oh, what a lovely place this is!" thought she. "I hope we shall stay here a long time. I should like to go down again to those woods; they looked so beautiful in my dream—and I just want to see whether they really *are* like that. And I intend to do everything in my power to make him"—Sylvia could not call her husband "Lancelot" now, even to herself—"to make him enjoy this day. I've given him a great deal of pain, and I must try to make some amends."

She went down into the garden that overlooked the sea. No one was in the trellised arbour, or on the damp lawns, but the birds were singing, and the buoyant air breathed all the hopefulness, the ever-renewed courage of opening day.

"How fragrant these summer mornings are!" she said to herself. "I feel as if I were a child again. I suppose I ought to be miserable, but I can't help feeling happier than I have done for a long time."

Then, glancing up the garden walk, she caught sight of Lancelot, and a sudden fit of intense shyness seized her—a shyness unlike anything she had ever experienced before; her cheeks burned as if he could read in her face all about the foolish dream. She looked so like the Sylvia who had gathered gooseberries with him, that a thrill, compounded of pain and love and longing, ran through him, stirring every drop of his blood. He repressed it by a strong act of will, and said, in the most matter-of-fact tone—

"Good-morning. I hope you don't feel tired after your long day's walk?"

"No, thank you," replied Sylvia, with equal coldness. She had made no advances, and yet she vaguely felt hurt, as if Lancelot had repelled her.

"Here's a letter for you."

"Oh, I never thought of asking for letters; I didn't think they would have come."

He handed her an envelope bearing the Winston post-mark, and turned back with her towards the house. When they were at breakfast in the coffee-room, Lancelot said, casually enough:

"I have a letter too, which I should like you to look at; there's something in it which concerns you. It's from the Aunt Constance who sent us that afternoon tea-set, if you remember."

Aunt Constance's name conveyed but a very hazy idea to our heroine's mind, but she did not confess her forgetfulness. Without a word, she took the letter, and read it conscientiously through.

"I'm afraid I don't quite understand this," said she, as she laid it down.

"I beg your pardon. I ought to have remembered that the letter would be something of an enigma to anyone who did not know all the circumstances. Well, the circumstances are these: Aunt Constance—Mrs. Colville her name is—has one son, who went to America a few years ago. He did tolerably well for a time, but I suppose he got tired of the place where he was, or thought he saw a chance of something better; anyhow, he made a move, which seems to have turned out badly. I don't clearly understand the present position of affairs, but Aunt Constance is in a dreadful way about him, as you may judge from the letter. She wrote some months ago, begging Bernard—that's my cousin's name—to come home, but he refused. I suppose he hoped fortune might take another turn; besides, he was ill. And now she hears that he is worse, and fancies he must be going into a consumption—a fear which, I imagine, is quite groundless; however, the upshot of it is that she wants me to go over to the States, and bring home this lost son by hook or by crook. 'I am ashamed to ask you,' she writes, 'especially at this moment, but I can't think of anyone else to apply to, and you've always been such a good nephew to me'—excuse my reading my own praise in this unseemly way—'but this may be a matter of life and death.' So, all things considered, I think I had better humour my good aunt, and set off as soon as I can. You will like to go back to Winston for a few weeks; or perhaps you would find it pleasanter to go to Beverston, and have your friends to visit you there. Yes, Sylvia, on second thoughts, I'm sure that will be the best plan. The world won't think my behaviour very bridegroom-like, but, you see"—and he smiled a rather grim smile—"it's a matter of life and death. I'll write to Mrs. Hornby to explain the situation, and *you*, at any rate, will understand my motive."

Sylvia did understand; there was no mistaking the significance with which he spoke. A handsome excuse for cutting short the pretext of honeymooning must of course be an untold relief to him, and not for the world would she have raised the faintest of objections; she had no right to do so. Yet this unexpected turn of affairs damped her spirits strangely; there would be no opportunity now of making amends for the pain she had given Lancelot. All the brightness of the pleasant morning was clouded over.

"What do you say to the plan?" said Lancelot, after a pause.

"I hope you'll do just what you think best."

"You're not disappointed at having your trip cut short?" then, evidently not thinking it necessary even to go through the formality of waiting for a reply, he continued: "You will find the house quite comfortable, I think; everything was in order when I left home on Monday. Of course you'll have your friends to stay with you as long as I'm away, and equally of course you'll make any alterations you please in the household arrangements. I don't think you'll find difficulties of any kind. I can take you to Beverston on my way to Liverpool."

"How long shall you be in America?" said Sylvia.

"Oh, that I can't in the least tell. It will have to

"THE KIND-HEARTED OLD HOUSEKEEPER LAID A HAND ON HER ARM" (*p.* 137).

depend entirely on what I find to do, and on Bernard's state of health. If he's as bad as his mother represents, I shall have to nurse him, I suppose. Not less than six weeks, certainly; probably a good deal longer."

"And how soon do you propose to start?"

"We might get home this evening, if you think you can manage it, and then I could go on to Liverpool to-night. It seems a pity to waste a day, and poor Aunt Constance breaking her heart all the time! Have you any objection?"

"No, thank you; your plans will suit me perfectly. I can be ready as soon as ever you like."

She got up, and went to her room, feeling more bitterly disappointed than was quite reasonable. All the pretty fancies of early morning had faded like delicate flowers in the glare of the sun. She packed her things rapidly, and was quite ready long before Lancelot came to announce that the carriage was at the door.

It was a tedious, dusty journey. This time they did not travel alone; indeed, Sylvia fancied that Lancelot purposely avoided getting into an empty compartment. The country had that rather bleak, impoverished look which the clean-shaven fields of July present after the hay has been carried, and the flowery meadows, with all their wealth of colour, have become memories of the past. The woods, too, wore that sober monotonous green which succeeds the delicate shades of spring, and is not yet glorified into the gold and crimson of

autumn. The tall white hemlocks in the hedgerows and the poppies or the mustard blossom among the standing corn gave the only touches of colour to the landscape.

At one of the later stations the carriages were filled up by a crowd of people who evidently belonged to a cheap trip. There was one portly lady among them whose conversation attracted Sylvia's attention. She seemed to have been discussing some love affair, for she burst out:

"Love, and all that nonsense! A woman at my time of life, that's been married twenty years, has no patience with such silly notions. Love may be a pretty amusement enough for boys and girls; but when Louisa Ann's as old as I am, she'll find that what you really want is a big bag of money to dip your hands into! No, no, I say; make sure of the money, and let love take its chance afterwards. We can make a shift to get on without love, but we can't do without the bread and butter."

Sylvia hoped Lancelot, who appeared to be buried in a newspaper, did not hear the stout woman's talk; nevertheless, this little episode did not make it easier to ask an awkward question, which she had been revolving in her mind ever since they left Barnstaple. The "cheap trippers" descended at the next station, and she must not lose this chance, though it was an effort to get the words out:

"Please, would you mind mentioning the sum of money which you think I ought to spend? It would make me feel so much more comfortable."

Lancelot looked at her inquiringly, as if he did not quite understand her drift.

"There's no occasion for that. I don't like bargains and divisions between husband and wife. My income —our income—is two thousand a year. You won't want to exceed that, I hope?" he added, with an attempt at a smile.

"Oh *no*, no! don't you see? It isn't that I'm wanting to spend money. I don't wish to spend more than I can possibly help, and I shan't need any for clothes; my clothes are mostly new. Only for housekeeping, of course, and the servants' wages while you are away, you know."

And she turned hot all over. She thought she knew what Lancelot was thinking of her: she had married him for his money, and was calculating how much she could get out of the transaction. Perhaps he saw something of what was passing in the poor girl's mind, for he answered kindly:

"I see: you think it would be more satisfactory to fix a certain sum for housekeeping. Well, I don't think you're likely to want more than three hundred pounds for all purposes while I'm in America; there won't be any great outgoings in connection with the house. The old cook has been a sort of housekeeper since my mother died; she's quite like one of the family, so that you can safely consult her on any question that might arise. So you see I shall not think you extravagant if you manage to exist on three hundred pounds for the next three months——"

"Three months!" said Sylvia. "Do you mean to be away so long as *that?*"

"I hardly expect to be quite so long; but really I can't say at all. And, of course, if any emergency arises, you must use as much money as you need, just as if it were your own—which it is, you know."

It was a strange home-coming for a bride. Lancelot had just time for a hasty repast before he set out again, and for a long time afterwards Sylvia never sat down to that table without calling to mind this last scene of the honeymoon—Lancelot on a high-backed chair at one end of the table, herself at the other, the large dining-room looking vacant and solemn in the evening light. As the servants were there all the time, there was no opportunity, even had there been inclination, for confidential talk.

The minutes sped on all too quickly.

"I wish," thought Sylvia, "oh! I wish I could find a few nice words to say to him before he goes. I'm afraid he thinks all manner of evil of me, and I can't bear to have him go away feeling like that. If only I could say something to soften his heart just a little bit!"

So when they rose from table, and Lancelot had gone upstairs to make ready for his journey, she hovered in the hall like an uneasy spirit, passing in review several small speeches, none of which pleased her; indeed, before any hopeful suggestion presented itself she heard her husband's step once more upon the stairs. She was standing near the open door, with the evening sun on her face.

"You look pale, Sylvia. I'm afraid you've done too much—travelled too quickly, perhaps."

"Oh no, not at all"—a pause—"only I'm very sorry you're going away."

"Are you indeed?" said he, looking at her again, and noting the colour that rose in her cheeks.

"Do you think I'm not speaking the truth?" said she, with a flash of resentment.

"I didn't know how you might feel under the circumstances."

"*You're* glad to be going away, aren't you?"

"I don't know. One can't always label one's feelings exactly."

And as at that moment the old housekeeper made her appearance with some neat white packets of sandwiches, while outside wheels made themselves heard, the time for explanations was over. Sylvia wondered whether he would kiss her at parting: the servants would think it so odd if he omitted that ceremony; but Lancelot was apparently prepared to disregard the servants' feelings; he held out his hand to her, gave her one more curiously inquiring look, and suddenly saying, "Good-bye, Sylvia!" vanished. She ran down the steps to see him drive away, but he never looked round. The kind-hearted old housekeeper laid a hand on her arm.

"Now don't take on, ma'am" (Sylvia had shown no symptoms of "taking on"). "Many a one crosses the sea, and comes safe home again. Though, to be sure, people can't help feeling nervous about these voyages. I remember my old mistress, ma'am, she was a great

one for anxiety: the young master never went out shooting, or hunting, or anything, but she looked to see him carried home dead, and many's the time she's called me into her room, and said, 'Elizabeth, I expected him home two hours ago; something must have happened.' And I would say, 'Don't meet troubles half-way, ma'am.' Every windy night now, ma'am, you and I 'll be thinking of those at sea, and the wrecks, and the fires, and all the things we've read about. Keep up your heart, ma'am."

Sylvia could not, for the life of her, refrain from bursting out laughing at the good housekeeper's peculiar mode ot keeping up her heart. Mrs. Bell gazed in perplexity at her new mistress as she ran upstairs, feeling dreadfully ashamed of her own unseemly conduct. She locked herself into her pretty room, and there, as the sources of laughter and tears are perilously near together, she cried her heart out, perhaps she would have found it hard to say why.

She was up betimes next morning, however, taking a survey of her new domains. House and garden alike presented a striking contrast to everything Sylvia had been used to: no inkstains on the walls, no threadbare places in the carpets (Mrs. Hornby always felt serenely comfortable about carpets that were not actually worn through to the boards), no blinds that refused to be drawn down, or descended with startling suddenness, no burnt patches in the hearthrugs (like that in the Elderwood drawing-room, where Arthur had set down the frying-pan last Christmas, when they were boiling toffee). No; at Beverston everything was in such spotless perfection that Sylvia shivered at the very idea of opening the doors to the horde of young barbarians from Winston.

"Mother shall come by herself," thought she. "I daren't let the children loose in this beautiful house."

She felt far more like a visitor than a mistress; was, in fact, fain to smile at her own bashfulness in opening the doors of the various rooms, and was glad when Mrs. Bell proposed to take her on a tour of inspection.

"This was my late mistress's room," she said, opening the door of the large bedroom at the top of the stairs; "it was in this room she died. No one's ever slept here since. The young master worshipped the very ground she trod on; there aren't many left in this world like her, that's certain. This room, you see, has not been painted and papered like the rest; he couldn't bear to see it altered. Oh! he has a tender heart; not like most men; he'll never forget!"

Shaking her head solemnly, she led the way into the dressing-room adjoining, where stood a child's bed.

"This was the master's room—bless him!—when he was a little one. The mistress couldn't bear to have him out of her sight or hearing, he being the only one, you see, and she a widow; she always left this door open, so that he could call her at nights when he wanted anything; if he hadn't had the sweetest nature in the world, she'd have spoiled him. Ah, ma'am, you're a happy woman to have got him for a husband, if you'll forgive me saying so!"

Sylvia looked round the little room with interest and read over the titles of the childish books (well worn, most of them) that filled two hanging bookshelves above the bed. Mrs. Bell opened the door of a small cupboard.

"Look here, ma'am: this is where he kept his white mice. I never could abide such creatures myself, but he made wonderful pets of them. One day, when he would be about nine, I suppose, he broke the drawing-room window with a catapult which he had borrowed on the sly from the gardener's boy, and the mistress made believe to be very cross: well, I suppose she spoke rather sharply; anyhow, what did Master Lancelot do but go straight down to the village, without saying a word to anybody, and sold all the mice he set such store by to some of the village boys, and then came in to the mistress with the money, and another shilling besides, which was all he had—for money always burned in his pockets in those days—and says, 'Here, mother,' says he, 'will this pay for the window?' You see, he thought the mistress couldn't afford to have the pane mended by the to-do she had made about it."

Good Mrs. Bell paused, and wiped her eyes with her apron.

"I declare, ma'am, I could almost cry now to think of the child going off like that, and selling the little creatures he was so fond of!"

Sylvia's heart, too, was touched by the old woman's way of telling the story.

"You seem to be attached to—to Mr. Bassett?"

"Attached to him, ma'am? That's what everyone is that knows him; and who knows him so well as I, who remember him in long clothes? and such a beautiful baby as he was, too!"

Sylvia smiled; she liked Mrs. Bell.

"This is a very pretty room, isn't it?" she said, as they came to the next door, which was her own.

"I'm glad you like it, ma'am. And you'd set more store by it if you could have seen how much pains the master took to have it made nice for you. The carpet, and the curtains, and everything: nothing was good enough for him; it seemed as if he couldn't leave this place to anybody else's taste, as he did the rest. And the last thing he said to me before going away on Monday was—'Now, Elizabeth,' says he, 'be sure you make this room as nice as ever you can, with the most beautiful flowers you can get, the day I bring her home.' Those were his very words, ma'am. He always liked my way of doing up flowers."

But, after all, it does not take very long to explore every nook and corner of a house and garden, and Sylvia was an expeditious young woman. Before that morning was over time began to hang heavily on her hands, and she went into the library to look for a book. The library was a pleasant room enough, and not too much crowded with works of reference. Lancelot's books and papers, of one sort or another, were heaped up rather untidily on a table in the window.

"I wonder you can allow such disorder," Sylvia had said to Mrs. Bell, when, in the course of their voyage of discovery, they had visited this private haunt of Lancelot's, and Mrs. Bell had looked a trifle put out by that innocent remark.

"Well, ma'am, I do assure *you* many's the time I've begged and prayed the master to let me keep his things in order for him—I can't bear to see them in a muddle. But he always says—'No, no, Elizabeth,' says he; 'I can't have you routing about among my papers. I'm always losing them, as it is, but if anyone else meddled with them, I should never be able to lay my hand on a single thing.' And men have to be humoured, ma'am, as we all know."

Therefore Sylvia did not venture to touch any of her husband's things; she avoided his table as religiously as if it had been charged with explosives, only glancing with some curiosity at the topmost layer. She saw there a blue book, the report of the Royal Commission on the depression of trade. A sudden idea occurred to her.

"He's fond of politics. I remember his saying so one day at Winston—yes, and he offered to teach me. I'd forgotten all about it. I wonder he didn't take the books to North Devon, and give me lessons there. I've heard of Girton girls coaching their bridegrooms when the young men had been plucked in examinations. But I know what I'll do. I'll find out some books, and set to work and learn. I always could learn quickly when I tried. I can do a lot before he comes home."

She hastily ran through the titles of the books on the shelves—"'Plutarch's Lives'—I've wanted to see that ever since I was a little girl. 'Froude's History of England'—that might do, if I can't find anything more modern; I know he likes history. Prescott's 'Conquest of Mexico.' I think I'll look in another place. Jones on 'Agricultural Chemistry'; 'Chronicles of a Clay Farm'—worse and worse. There really ought to be a catalogue when you have such a number of books; and I can't see the names in the top row very well."

Standing on a chair, she found a series of bound-up magazines that looked fascinating; determined, however, not to be led off the scent by any counter-attraction, she persisted in her search till she was rewarded by a whole row of most business-like blue books. She picked out one of them, and stuck to it in the most praiseworthy manner till lunch time.

"I'm afraid I shan't remember half of what I read unless I do something to fix it in my head," said she to herself, as she enjoyed that meal in solitary state. "I shall really have to make an abstract of it, as we used to do at school."

Next morning brought Sylvia two letters: one from Lancelot, a brief note, announcing his departure from Liverpool, the other from Mrs. Hornby:

"MY DEAR CHILD,—I have just received from your husband the kindest and most considerate of letters. But first let me tell you—what I am sure you will understand without many words—the *deep concern and sympathy* I feel for you in this sudden clouding over of your new happiness."

"Whatever can he have told her?" thought Sylvia, with a sensation of fear. "Surely he would never let out the truth!" She read on:

"But it is *most good* of him to sacrifice his own wishes in this way for his aunt's sake—and to us it will, of course, be delightful to see you again so soon. We propose, if quite convenient, coming to you on Tuesday, for I cannot bear to think of you in your loneliness. I am enclosing Lancelot's letter; it is so beautifully expressed that I am sure you will enjoy reading it."

The rest of Mrs. Hornby's epistle consisted chiefly of little details about travelling arrangements, and so forth; but there was one item of news:

"P.S.—We have just heard of Mr. Lowndes's engagement to some lady in London."

"Poor Angela! I'm awfully sorry for her," thought Sylvia. "I never could bear that Mr. Lowndes."

But this exciting intelligence, though it made Sylvia very indignant, could not divert her curiosity even for a moment from Lancelot's letter to Mrs. Hornby, which ran thus:

"MY DEAR MRS. HORNBY,—I am very sorry to have to tell you that very unexpected circumstances have cut short our honeymoon. My aunt, Mrs. Colville, is in great trouble about a son who is ill in America, and has begged me to go at once and look after him. Sylvia will thus be left alone at Beverston, and it will be a great charity if you will go and stay with her—all of you—during the time I shall be away: two or three months, it may be. I hope you will not call this a very presumptuous and troublesome request, but I want Sylvia to make acquaintance with her new home, and it would be very lonely for her to stay at Beverston alone. I shall be very grateful to you if you will do me this favour. I am sure there is nothing Sylvia would enjoy so much as having you all about her, and taking her brothers and sisters to visit the places of interest in the neighbourhood. She has a scheme, too, for getting Letty some singing lessons; there is a very good teacher in Highborough, I believe.

"Perhaps I am taking a liberty in presuming on my new rights as a son so far as to say that Sylvia has told me something of your late money losses. I need not tell you that it will be a great delight to myself, as well as her, to feel that we can do something to make those losses weigh less heavily on you. We can talk over these money matters in detail by and by; meanwhile, will you, my dear mother, accept a birthday present from us in the shape of the enclosed cheque?" (Two hundred pounds, as Sylvia afterwards discovered.) "Sylvia has told me that the eighth of next month is 'Mother's birthday.' I need not add that any expenses connected with your journey to Beverston will be my affair, as I am making the plan entirely for our own convenience. And Sylvia must persuade you to let us send Charley and Michael to Rugby. I have not had a public school education myself, and have often regretted it; it will be a pleasure, therefore, to give that advantage to my new brothers. The children must make themselves thoroughly at home at Beverston; it is pleasant to think of their merry voices in the quiet old house.

"After all is said and done, I fear you will think I am behaving like a very bad husband in leaving Sylvia so soon after our marriage; but I think if you knew

all the circumstances of the case you could forgive me. I remain, my dear mother,

"Your affectionate son,

"LANCELOT BASSETT."

Sylvia read and re-read this letter. Perhaps it was a shade Jesuitical, and some passages were stilted, but she was not looking out for faults.

"Oh, Lancelot!" she said to herself, "how kind and good you have been to me—me that have made you so unhappy! I don't deserve it. I wish I could make it up to you. Perhaps I may some time, if it isn't too late. No wonder mother was charmed; it *is* a beautiful letter. Why, he makes it appear all through as if *he* were begging favours, and *we* granting them, whereas it is all—Oh! all the other way. I've heard mother say of Aunt Angela that she spoils half the kindnesses she does by demanding such an overpowering weight of gratitude for them, but that's not the way with him. It's more than a generous letter; none but a chivalrous man could have written it. And some girls have lovers like Mr. Lowndes!"

A devil's advocate might perhaps have put Lancelot's conduct in a rather different point of view: might have hinted that he was only acting with worldly wisdom in making the best of a bad business: that, as it was impossible to leave his wife's family to starve, it was just as easy to do the thing graciously as ungraciously; but Sylvia was in no mood for ungenerous criticism. She opened a little green book she had found in the library—Malory's "Morte d'Arthur"—and turning to the last page, read over and over again, till she knew it by heart, the lamentation of Sir Ector over the dead Lancelot:

"There thou liest, that wert never matched of earthly knight's hand; and thou wert the courtliest knight that ever bore shield; and thou wert the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrode horse; and thou wert the truest lover of a sinful man that ever loved woman; and thou wert the kindest man that ever strake with sword; and thou wert the goodliest person that ever came among press of knights; and thou wert the meekest man and the gentlest that ever ate in hall among ladies; and thou wert the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in the rest."

END OF CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

AN EASY MODE OF DECORATING ARTICLES FOR THE HOME.

CLOISONNÉ EMAIL.

DESIGN FOR A PANEL.

REAL CLOISONNÉ (CHINESE) A.D. 1450.

NOVELTIES in art work have of late been most scarce; diligent seeking for such has only been rewarded by disappointment; managers of art societies have been in despair, and amateur workers have had to fall back on some of the minor arts introduced long ago. Now, from Berlin, comes a new process for the artistic decoration of articles large and small, useful and ornamental, to wake us from our lethargy. Vases, plaques, flower-pots can be easily made into things of beauty; old furniture can be renewed and prettily decorated with imitation Wedgewood plaques. Glass bottles, tumblers, scent bottles, jugs, can be made to resemble Bohemian or Venetian glass, and leather blotters, card-cases, book covers may be richly ornamented and all with the slightest trouble. The emails are equally suitable for decorating the walls of a room and the door panels, for carrying out designs on metal and for colouring wicker-work.

The application of the emails is simplicity itself. Let us for the practical description take a terra-cotta plaque, as that is one of the easiest things to commence on, being nearly flat, and consequently easier to hold steady than a vase. The plaque is bought with a ready incised design. This saves all trouble of designing one's self, of copying, or tracing, consequently, anyone unable to draw can compass this decoration. With a large brush a coat of Cloisonné-lacquer is laid all over the plaque to prevent absorption of colours. It is necessary to see there is no dust on the article before the lacquer is employed. After a few minutes have been allowed for the lacquer to dry the work may be proceeded

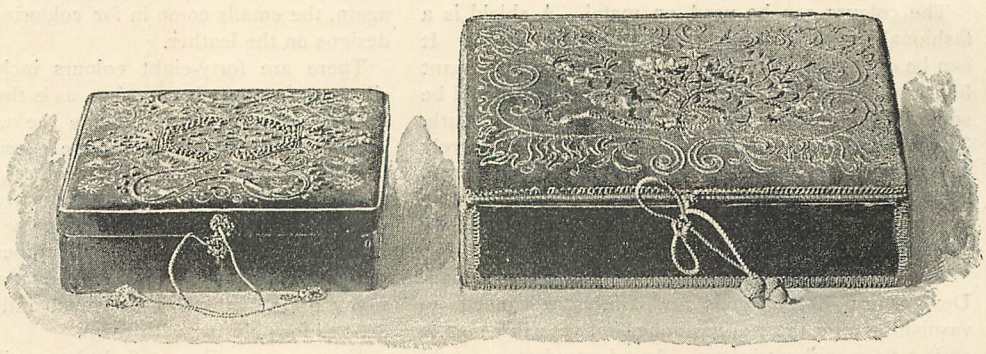
DECORATING WITH CLOISONNÉ EMAIL.

with in the following way:—Fill in all the incised lines with Cloisonné gold, silver or copper-bronze. When the bronze is dry fill in all the design with two or three, or with several emails, according to the style of design. If Oriental effects are desired then many brilliant colours are used, but quiet colourings are often more admirable, though not so striking. Small camel-hair brushes are employed for the work and all parts of the design must be equally covered with the email. The colours require to be thoroughly stirred up before any are put out into saucers (or the lids of the tins) for use. It is all-important that the brushes should be kept clean or the tints will suffer ; for this purpose turpentine must be kept ready at hand. If it is found necessary or desirable to thin the emails the Cloisonné thinning medium is to be mixed with them, as this preserves their brilliancy whilst turpentine is said to destroy it. The colours must not be permitted to trespass on the bronze outlines, which should be always clear, clean, and sharp cut. When the whole design is painted place the article carefully aside out of the way of dust, and where nothing will touch it until the emails have hardened thoroughly. The hardening will be perfected in a few hours and the surface will be brilliant, and this without any firing or varnishing.

Designs with incised outlines, however, are not the only ones used for imitation Cloisonné. Those in relief are as much admired, though, to our thinking, not so good. Terra-cotta plaques with heads in high relief as centre decorations and scroll or leaf borders round the edges are effective when painted. The grounding is usually done in some pale tint, such as ivory, grey, sea green, or straw, whilst the design is executed in medium shades and the outer lines are given in black, myrtle green, sapphire blue, or marone. The backgrounds of these plaques are seldom, if ever, gilded.

Numberless are the pretty ornaments that can be produced. Terra-cotta vases can be made to resemble real Cloisonné. The design, say of small flowers and leaves on a turquoise ground, must first be sketched in, then the outlines will be gilded. Next the flowers—mostly white—and the green leaves will be put in. The vase will be rimmed round the top and bottom with gold, and lastly, the turquoise ground will be filled in. These tall vases will be found most useful for grasses, and are newer than the red clay painted with naturalistic flowers which have been so long in use. Then there are the small boat-shaped vases with stands. They answer admirably for dinner table decorations, and look extremely well when filled with flowers. There should be one for each corner, and a large bowl or boat vase for the centre ; the *menus* should match, all the articles being as near as possible like real Cloisonné. Other artists may prefer to paint on the embossed boat-shaped vases, as that saves all the trouble of drawing the design first, but then they cannot expect to get the Cloisonné appearance. The embossed vases are, however, extremely pretty and look rich when coloured.

It is quite possible to paint ornaments in imitation



CASKETS (LEFT-HAND WORKED IN CORAL, RIGHT-HAND IN SILVER AND GOLD).
(*From Designs by the Decorative Needlework Society.*)

of Doulton ware if suitable tints are chosen. Then, again, gesso workers can produce imitation Palissy ware, by first modelling the design and then applying the emails. The advantage of using them is that they require no firing or varnishing, yet they dry with a glaze and will stand washing. It goes without saying that the emails do not equal fired colours. No imitation can be as good as the real thing, but there are many amateurs who would hesitate over spending months in learning the art of china painting ; they would object to the expense and trouble of having their work fired, and also to the risk which they must run of getting pieces broken in the kiln or in transit.

Flower brackets after the style of a half-opened folding fan are novel wall decorations, these are to be obtained in terra cotta for email paintings, so too, are candlesticks, jugs, match stands, and pin trays. A large plaque, with flat email decoration, set on crossed bamboo legs makes a charming table or flower stand, and the expensive china tubes for umbrellas can easily be copied.

The colours can be used on metal. A shield is a fashionable wall decoration, preferably for a hall. It can be decorated with the coat of arms, or a rampant lion or a dragon shows well. The colouring should be somewhat strong, especially if the hall is at all dark. The work is best seen if the shield is hung up merely as a decoration, but utilitarians will probably have it fitted with pegs for hats or sticks. Wooden shields may take the place of metal, but these should be grounded entirely with colour.

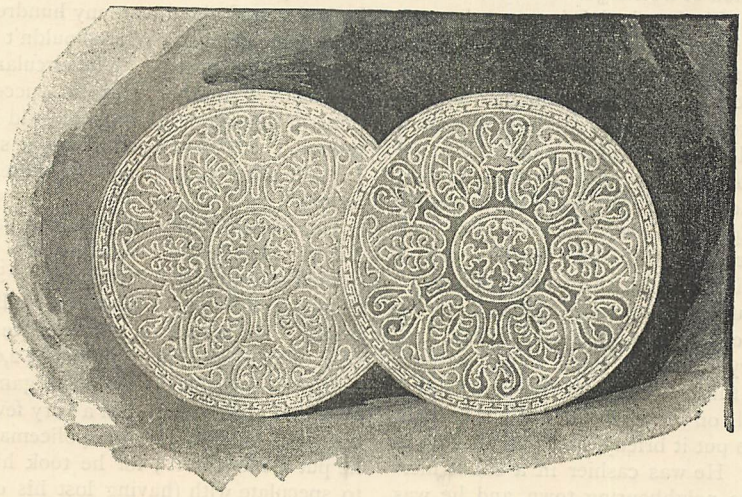
The emails can be utilised for house decoration. Designs on door panels and friezes will need no varnishing after the work is done, and yet will bear the spring clean without injury. Anaglypta designs could with no difficulty be tinted and a rich looking frieze be produced by anyone quite ignorant of drawing. It is in the decoration of mantel-pieces, overmantels and small pieces of furniture that the usefulness of Cloisonné email will be found. Oblong panels of wood, terra-cotta, or anaglypta can be inserted with delightful results. These should be painted to appear as much as possible like enamels properly so called. The best plan is to copy the floral design of a piece of real Cloisonné, keeping exactly to the colours and as closely as may be to the pattern. If it is thought too much of an undertaking to insert the panels, the email paintings may be done on the piece of furniture to represent panels and finished with a rim of gold.

Embossed and painted leather seats of chairs are most fashionable. One or two are used in a dining-room, library, or hall. Victoria stools, Hamlet seats and folding-chairs, as well as piano seats, are now upholstered in leather, and very often the leather is embossed and then painted, gilded, and silvered. Whilst a whole suite would be objectionably showy, just two or three seats are pleasing additions to a room. The frame should be of dark oak, carved or plain. Here, again, the emails come in for colouring the embossed designs on the leather.

VASES (EASTERN DESIGN) SUITABLE FOR THE PROCESS.

There are forty-eight colours including the gold, silver, and copper bronze, but, as is the case with every kind of painting, nothing like the whole number is requisite. Attractive pieces are executed with about half a dozen emails. The colours, lacquer, gold powder and brushes are sold in neat boxes of different sizes. All the articles are inexpensive ; the cost of the boxes varying according to the number and size of the tins of colour they contain. They are to be had of many of the artists' colourmen, and the terra-cotta articles for painting with them.

Errors are easily rectified, the email can be scraped off with a knife or can be painted over with the right colour. Occasionally birds' feathers and flower petals



A PLAQUE AS IT COMES FROM THE POTTERY AND AFTER IT HAS BEEN DECORATED.

are sprinkled with Cloisonné glitters to give them a sparkling mother-of-pearl appearance. The glitters are prepared in various tints, and are powders. Whilst the bird's wing or petal is still wet the glitter is lightly scattered over, and it becomes fixed on the surface as the email dries. The parts that are to undergo this process should be done before the rest of the painting, so that any powder which may accidentally fall beyond the wing or petal may be brushed off; or the portion to be glittered can, if preferred, be left unpainted until all the surrounding parts are finished and dry. The glitters must be used sparingly, otherwise the work will suffer; a meretricious effect will be given to it quite at variance with successful artistic decoration.

ON PUTTING ONE'S FOOT IN IT.

SOME of our old sayings have such innate vitality that, although they may be old and more or less vulgar, they never die. The origin of these sayings is, for the most part, lost in antiquity. But while we cannot say certainly how they arose, we can see for ourselves how they apply. Sometimes the words may be used and the spirit of the saying missed. As, for instance (in connection with the title of this paper), in the case of an Irishman who was being shown round a garden by a friend, in which garden was a hole, in which hole the visitor stepped; whereupon the host apologised that he had not warned his guest, who answered, "Pray, don't apologise; I have put my foot in it nicely, thank you all the same." No, the spirit of the phrase is unquestionably to make a mess of things, to get into a quandary, to blunder. And how many of us "put our foot in it!"

You see that man going down the street yonder, in front of you. He had a day's shooting the other day on Farmer Giles's farm, and as he was returning to the farmhouse in the evening, he saw a couple of wood-pigeons feeding on a stubble close to the house. How to get within shot of them was the question, for, as everybody knows, wood-pigeons are exceedingly wary birds. There was a low but thick holly hedge close to the pigeons, and our sportsman decided to go round and creep behind that hedge. Now had our friend been a genuine sportsman, he would have given those poor birds a chance, and either killed or missed them on the wing; but, being a greedy and misguided young man he fired at them as they were feeding, and, to his great surprise, killed them both. But a still greater surprise was in store for him, for even as he was picking up his birds, a rough hand was laid upon his arm, and a rough voice shouted in his ear, "Yo've put your fut in it this time, young man, and no mistake. Them's my prize pigeons, a-feeding on my own be-ans, and the penalty for killing tame pigeons is forty shillings and costs. So come yo wi' me to the Squire's, and I'll charge yo with the deed." He did not go to the Squire's, for he thought it would be more prudent to settle up without; but he was "charged with the deed" all the same—and the charge was a sovereign.

Come with me into this prison—under the circum-

stances the governor will not object to this unauthorised introduction of a stranger—and I will show you a man who "put his foot in it" in a much more serious way. He is engaged in "shot drill," the heaviest punishment that prisoners have to endure. Do you know what shot drill is? Imagine a large rectangular courtyard, with a grass plot in the centre, and a cinder path all round the grass plot. All round this grass plot, at about twenty yards from each other, are a number of short posts, only some ten or twelve inches high, with slightly hollowed crowns, upon each of which rests a cannon ball, and beside each of which stands a prisoner. At the word "March!" each prisoner lifts up his shot, and carries it to the next post, and so on and on. It seems easy, but, if you think so, try it for an hour. Our prisoner evidently does not think it easy, for the perspiration stands in great beads on his forehead. What brought him here? Well, to put it briefly, he "put his foot in it." I will explain. He was cashier in a small mercantile house in the neighbouring town, and he was treated with the greatest confidence. Year after year his salary was increased, but his expenses increased even more rapidly than his salary. One day the postman brought him a stockbroker's circular, wherein certain mines were spoken of as "certain to rise." A week after another circular came, and the mines were stated to have risen considerably and to be "going still higher." The next week a third edition was received, and still the mines were rising. "Going to a fabulous price, rising fast; wire orders without delay," was now the cry. And the price quoted was higher again.

"Well," said our prisoner to himself, "it can't be much harm to put a ten-pound note in this concern."

He put the ten-pound note in, and next week the mines were "rising still." In less than a month from the time he bought his shares he sold them for more than fifty pounds.

"This beats the office," he said. "It's easy enough to make money if you only know how!"

So he began, knowing how, to make money. He was very fortunate at first, and in less than six months he had netted about as many hundred pounds. Then he became greedy. Why shouldn't he turn the hundreds into thousands? The circular came at the right moment. "Another gigantic success. The richest mine in the world. Lumps of gold lying all over the ground. £235 produced from one shovelful of gravel! Present price 3s. to 4s. per £1 share, fully paid. Wire orders."

He wired: "Buy me two thousand shares in the Yankee Doodle Gold mine, at 4s."

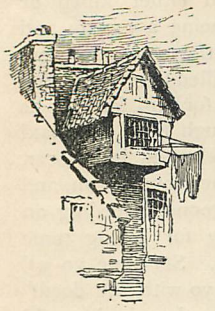
He received a reply telegram: "Shares gone up to 5s., 6s., and rising." He wired: "Buy at best market price." He meant to have a slice of that cake, you see. The reply came: "Bought 2,000 shares at 7s.; best price possible." Then the gambler's fever fairly laid hold of him. And in a very few weeks something else laid hold of him—a policeman. Unmistakably he put his foot in it; for he took his master's money to speculate with (having lost his own), and then his master took him.

Some years ago I knew a very promising young man—a clerk in a London "house." Everyone who knew him thought he was clever, and he thought so himself. He had risen in six years to almost the "top of the tree," and he began to think he was indispensable to the house. So he applied for "a rise," though his salary had been regularly and liberally raised every year. The principal, thinking he was rather ungrateful, gave him a short answer, whereupon my Lord Noodle gave *him* a short notice, thinking that would bring the firm to book. It did—it brought them to book another clerk. Just then the "times were bad," and for twelve months this foolish young man was out of employment, and finally had to enter as junior clerk. So he put his foot in it.

And if I make this paper any longer, I shall put my foot in it, so I will, instead, put my hand to it, and subscribe myself

J. T. BURTON WOLLASTON.

MR. SKIMMER'S AMBITION.



THE Reverend Jabez Skimmer was sitting by his study fire in some mental disquietude. Everything in his surroundings spoke, and spoke truly, of comfort and prosperity; as to the outer world, his congregation were at peace with him, and his position in the small country town in the north where he lived was an honourable one; as to the inner world of home, he had married well in every sense. He seemed a man to be envied. Yet all day he had been troubled, and now, when he should have been busy with the composition of his Christmas sermon, he could by no means settle down to it.

His worry arose in this way. On opening his letters at breakfast that morning, he found one from an old college friend, who, in sending the good wishes of the season, at the same time informed him that he had recently taken the degree of Doctor of Divinity, and had been much complimented by the Regius Professor upon the dissertation he had presented as a qualification. Mr. Skimmer, pleased with the news, incautiously read out the letter to the assembled family, and so roused general exclamations of, "Oh, papa! why don't you do the same? It would be so nice to hear you called 'Doctor' Skimmer, just like the Dean. And then the beautiful hood!"

Somewhat taken aback by this effect of his friend's letter, yet flattered a little by the dignity in prospect, and noticing also that his wife, though she said nothing, looked a full approval of her children's sentiments, the good man replied, "Well, well, I've never thought about it; but, if you wish it, there's no difficulty at all, only a little expense. But you ought to know that the doctor's is the second degree in Divinity; in order to get it I must first be a B.D."

"And how do you get that? Is it very hard?"

"Really, I never inquired particularly; I don't think it is much more than a matter of form. So far as I remember, the candidate reads his essay—in Latin, of course—before the professor, and the rest of the necessary hour is filled up with a sort of conversational examination on the subject of it; then the fees must be paid—that is the essential matter—and in a few days the degree is given."

Having gone so far, he found he was not to be allowed to draw back, and before breakfast was over he was committed to an attempt on the title of "Doctor." He looked up his university "Calendar" and found nothing there to disabuse his mind of the impression he had retained of the procedure, and this being far from formidable, he saw everything smooth before him except one matter—he must write an essay on something or other, and he could not think what. This was his trouble. He had kept his name on the college books, but he had not been a studious man, and was utterly unconscious of the existing state of learning, and of the progress made in the work of the university since he had resided there. His time and thoughts had been fully occupied with parochial work and with the ordinary duties of home and society. Hence he was at a loss for a subject on which he could write so as to make a favourable impression on

"HE POURED OUT THE WHOLE STORY" (*p.* 147).

a learned hearer; while anxious to do himself credit, he could think of nothing in his old studies which he could "rub up" and make presentable for this occasion.

After worrying over it all day, he was at last about to give up in despair when a bright idea flashed across him. He had invented for himself some peculiar ideas about the ancient Hebrew worship, and under the influence of a miniature Stonehenge in the neighbourhood he had adopted some equally peculiar ideas about the Druids. He had never ventured to avow these in public, but now he thought he would try to put them into shape. "They are not exactly Theology," he said to himself, "but they lie on its outskirts, and if I do myself justice people may see there is something in my theory." His anxiety was removed; he sat down at his desk, and that Christmas sermon was by the most severe critics acknowledged to be a really excellent discourse.

* * * * *

Before very long it became known to his friends that he was aspiring to higher academical rank, and the ladies of his congregation at once decided that here was a fine opportunity for a presentation. "It will be a pleasant addition to the Easter offering," said Mrs. Churchwarden Jervis to her spouse, "if we are able to give him a new set of robes, and also the fees he will have to pay: for nothing can be done without money, even in the university." All was arranged very quietly, and after Easter Mr. Skimmer was agreeably surprised at this new proof of his people's goodwill. By this time he was able to thank them with an even mind. The necessary sermon had been preached "before the university" on a saint's day, just at the end of term, when nobody was present to hear it; and his essay had been written out, "done into Latin" (by a master at the Grammar School), and almost learnt by heart. "All his arrangements were made," he told them, "and unless some unforeseen obstacle came in the way he hoped to make use of that generous gift in a very few weeks."

* * * * *

Towards the end of May, accordingly, he took his ticket for Camford, and before evening he had reached that famous town. Soon he was occupied in revisiting the places familiar to him twenty years before. Here were his old rooms, the windows splendid with plants in full bloom; there were his friend Curtis's, where he had spent so many pleasant hours. Changes indeed there were, but the new was insignificant compared with what remained unaltered, and he almost forgot the flight of years and his present business there in wandering through college after college, recalling old associations.

Next day he read his essay in the schools before the learned Dr. Hynkson, who had been deputed to attend, and who was the only listener. A little nervous at first, the quiet of the place and the languor bred of a warm sunny afternoon in early summer soon made themselves felt, and for three-quarters of an hour he placidly read away; one by one in due order he trotted out his various arguments in support of the thesis that the "Ancient Hebrew worship was continued by the Druids," maintaining that the Druids were of a separate race from the Britons, whose priests they were, and belonged to some Oriental (perhaps Jewish) tribe, "like the mysterious Druses of Mount Lebanon," and illustrating his remarks by the lonely stone-circle on the hillside near ——. Little being known of the Druids, more is left to the imagination, and all could be used in support of the theory, even the oak and mistletoe. Dr. Hynkson listened at first with some interest, for renewed attention was then being given to Old Testament criticism, and he expected something of this sort; but as the reader went on, interest was followed by a slight feeling of amusement, which very rapidly changed to sternness, and even anger. He was a man who took everything seriously, the degrees in Divinity included; he had himself taken a leading part in requiring higher qualifications for these degrees. "What does he mean," he thought, "by forcing stuff like this upon us? It is neither scientific Theology, nor even the common-sense platitudes one would expect from a man of his highly respectable appearance."

He did not trust himself to speak, however, and Mr. Skimmer was too much engrossed in his reading to notice the gradual deepening of his hearer's frown and the increased compression of his lips; but the few questions put at the conclusion made the essayist somewhat uneasy, showing him so many weak points in his arguments and such a different reading of Scripture and history. He could not help seeing that his thesis had been a most unfortunate one. "It is always the way with these great scholars," he moaned to himself; "unless you agree with them in everything, they try to make you look like a simpleton." Still he had no glimmering of the fact that what in the old days had been only a formality was now a reality, until, on returning to his hotel late in the evening, after visiting an old friend whom he had chanced to find in residence, he read this brief note which was waiting for him:

"DEAR SIR,—I regret to say that the Regius Professor, to whom I have shown your dissertation, agrees with me that it is inadmissible as a qualification for the degree of B.D.

"Yours faithfully,
"W. HYNKSON."

The effect of this thunderbolt on the candidate may be imagined. He had thought his essay highly creditable to him, but beyond the wound to his self-love was the terrible consciousness that all his neighbours knew why he had come to Camford, and now he must go home "plucked" like some scapegrace undergraduate. What would his family say? And what would his congregation think of him after this?

He went to bed indeed, that night, but not to sleep, and at an early hour in the morning hastened to Dr. Hynkson's rooms to see if he could not make some impression on him. This learned man was hard at work among his books: was he not preparing a history of the Oriental Church from the time of the Emperor Justinian to the schism under the Patriarch Photius? Of course he guessed his visitor's errand, and at once began:

"I was very sorry, Mr. Skimmer, to have to reject——"

"I have come to ask," interrupted he, "if your decision is final—if I can do nothing to make my essay passable? You don't know how very serious this is to me," the poor man exclaimed.

And then he went on, and poured out the whole story: how his family were coming up in a few days to see him take his degree, how his congregation were preparing to congratulate him upon his advance. He quite broke down as he finished, thinking of the shame before him.

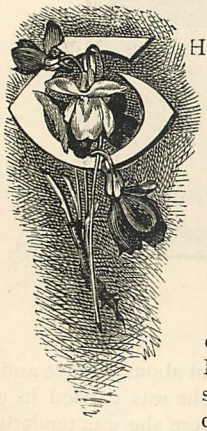
Dr. Hynkson, though severe, was not so unsympathetic but that he too was moved by the sight of a man's grief, and by finding how heavy a blow he had inflicted, and to his own surprise he almost found himself in tears also. Had he known the story beforehand his duty would have been the same, but he might, he thought, have acted more gently. His decision was, however, unalterable, and he could only say at last:

"I am very sorry—very sorry indeed, as I said before—that I was obliged to reject your dissertation, but it cannot possibly be accepted. The University requirements are much stricter than they used to be in these matters. That is no reason why you should not try again with a suitable thesis, treated in a more scientific manner." Then, after a pause—"And as to your congregation—well, *I* shall tell no tales, and nobody will know more than what you choose to disclose. You will want a little time to recover yourself; why not take a short trip to the Continent with the money they have given? You can say that you found, on reaching here, that it would not be practicable for you to proceed to a higher degree at present; and as I offered you an introduction to that famous theologian Dr. Weisshaupt, of the University of Irgenden, you thought they would not object to your using their present in paying him a short visit."

And so it was settled. Mr. Skimmer (who is not yet a B.D.) took the trip to the Continent; and though it is true that a little malicious gossip did circulate in the neighbourhood, other more exciting events soon banished the remembrance of it from the minds of his acquaintances, and by the following Christmas all things were as peaceful in his environment as they had been before that vain ambition seized upon him.

B. L.

UNCLE JOHN'S CUCUMBER FRAMES: A GARDEN SKETCH.



THE Christmas festivities were well nigh over at Hollybush Manor, and the usual interchanges of hospitality in the neighbourhood in the shape of dinner and evening parties had all passed off with unusual spirit and success. Major Merriman had been gone nearly three weeks, leaving his not over-industrious son Charlie to plod through his Cicero and quadratics under the guidance of Mr. Haredale, and his mettlesome daughter Edith, to the care of his old friend's daughter, Amy Singleton. And, unhappily, if the painstaking tutor had thus far found it necessary on more than one occasion to remind his young scholastic recruit that without real application and interest in his work no success could be looked for, so also had poor Amy found it uphill work to instil into the handsome and high-spirited little brunette even a suspicion of her own gentleness.

And it was with some degree of uneasiness that Mr. Singleton had already begun to speculate mentally as to what the effect of these recent arrivals might be upon the youthful members of his household, whose interests were dearer to him than anything in the world. Old bachelor as he was, he loved his four nieces and nephews with the intensity of a father. He was their uncle, but in a sense he was something more. For this is what had happened some five-and-twenty years before. His only brother, Captain George Singleton, (his junior by little more than a year), to whom he was entirely devoted, had about that time, wooed, loved, and married a certain Amy Forsyth. Military service had entailed upon the young couple residence in India, where but six years or thereabouts from the time of their marriage, a raging fever had laid both of them low, and their four little orphan children had then been committed to the guardianship of their uncle, John Singleton, who at once left with them for Europe, and since then had settled with them at Hollybush Manor. But more remains to be told. Unknown to nearly every one—for he had never allowed it to transpire—poor John Singleton had himself also passionately loved Amy Forsyth during the early days of his brother's courtship, but at once detecting the girl's decided attachment, he there and then did violence to all thought for himself, and strove only to add to the happiness of the brother that he tenderly loved, and of the girl whom he loved as dearly. No notion of rivalry had he once harboured, but keen and silent suffering at one time brought him well nigh to death's door. Then the young mother was taken, but it was not until the last hours of her husband had come that the dying George found strength to whisper in his brother's ear that he had for long suspected his secret.

"God bless and comfort you, my dear John: to none but to your loving and unselfish care would I ever

trust my four dear children!" What wonder then that old John Singleton had been more than a father to them from that day forward. The waywardness and violent outbursts of passion on the part of Edith Merriman had sorely perplexed poor Amy.

"I can do nothing with her, dear uncle," said she one morning in the library after breakfast; "when one of her fits of jealous temper comes on, she rushes madly into the garden, and I generally find it best to leave her to herself."

rid of unsightly refuse. Darkness had come on, and the work at this point, unhappily for Edith Merriman, had been brought necessarily to a standstill. And it was the dusk of the evening of this very day that the young lady selected for one of her pyrotechnic displays, when by way of giving vent to her feelings she rushed headlong round the garden, and found herself suddenly crashing, face foremost, upon the jagged foundation of brickbats, winding up with a scream which brought out two of the maid-servants at

"SHE WAS TENDERLY NURSED BY THE PATIENT AND LONG-SUFFERING AMY."

"Well my darling," said Mr. Singleton, "we must do the best we can; the girl I fancy was spoilt in her childhood, and never having perhaps been crossed in anything, is now like a runaway horse; but I want you also, my dear, to check your sister in her increasing coquetry or trifling with young Merriman, as I very much object to it."

It so happened that Bailey the gardener, with the help of the young Singletons, had marked out a spot for a couple of new hot-beds, and after measuring out a space on the kitchen-garden borders, a foot in excess of the square area of the garden-frames which they intended to use, had dug a pit of about eighteen inches deep, into which they had thrown what Bailey called garden lumber, in the shape of old bricks, large stones, pieces of china, or lobster tins, etc., partly by way of a foundation and for drainage purposes, and partly as a means of getting

once to her assistance. Terribly cut about the face and, it was feared, disfigured for life, she was carried in a fainting condition to her room, where she was tenderly nursed by the patient and long-suffering Amy Singleton, to whom she had acted so cruelly.

"A very considerable degree of peace," Mr. Singleton remarked, with a smile of condolence to his niece the next morning, "has been restored to the house." Nor can we wonder that Bailey and his youthful undergardeners lost no time in completing their work. And it might be worth while to see what they were about.

"Don't suppose master's angry with me for leaving these here brick-badges a-lying about overnight," said Bailey. "O' course, if I'd a thought that the young lady was going to run round like that 'ere, I'd a told her to look out for the brick-badges Mas' George."

But both the brothers replying with little more than a half-amused chuckle, confidence was at once restored to the guileless Bailey, and their operations were resumed.

So the good man, heaving a sigh of relief, suddenly exclaimed: "And now for this 'ere manure!" The young apprentices had been told by the gardener that very often manure was improperly used in the formation of a hot bed; that sometimes, for example, it had lain too long in the stable or heap and had begun to get scorched internally, or again, that although it had been taken from the stable in good condition, yet if at once it were all heaped up for a hot-bed, the heat would be violent but would not last long.

All three of them then carefully and loosely shook out every fork full, and as it attained a foot in height it was sprinkled with water. This, Bailey said, would perhaps be unnecessary when the manure was very moist at first. By this means, the whole begins to ferment, and you can afterwards thrust a long stake through the heap in order to ascertain how warm it is getting. Sometimes, unfortunately, it may be found that it is heating too much, in which case the whole would have to be shaken out again into another heap, but in doing this, it is well to contrive to have the outside stuff of the *old* heap in the *middle* of the new one. A little water would have to be given again, using the rose on the spout of the can. When you find the heat has moderated slightly, you can then build up your heap finally, over your brick-bat foundation and on the spot on which the frame is afterwards to stand. Gently this time pat the manure down with a fork, not getting it, however, too close, but, on the other hand still getting it well and compactly together. Now, more particularly when you have this brick-bat foundation, your manure heap must be fully four feet in height, and the whole uniform in height and pressed down all over alike but lightly. The stake again thrust in and allowed to remain there for a few hours, you can, by drawing it out and feeling it, test the temperature. As the heat slightly rises the frame can be finally placed on the heap.

"And now," said Bailey the next day, "we will put on the soil in which we shall afterwards grow our cucumbers."

The young Singletons had noticed that the whole heap had already begun to sink, and Bailey, said it would, in fact, go down nearly a foot before it quite settled. About three inches' thickness of soil was then laid over the entire surface of the manure in the frame. It merely consisted of loam from some decayed turfs, the soil being dispersed uniformly, the rank sort of steam, that would otherwise rise up, was kept down and heat thus the better maintained. The glass was then put on and all was complete. All this, it being a forward season, took place towards the end of February; but in the late spring, it had often been delayed until quite the middle of March, as a hot-bed made up a little too soon is apt to lose some of its heat if any severe weather returns. "A little later on," added Bailey, "we can sow our cucumber seed even in this soil, but I generally like forcing a young plant and then planting it out afterwards in the hot-bed. And this I always do in the case of melons."

Old Mr. Singleton a few days afterwards said that he thought that the shock Miss Edith Merriman had undoubtedly had to her system would in the end prove highly beneficial to her. She had passed a week upstairs before she was at all presentable, and it had given her time for some quiet reflection, for to lie and think, or to listen to the gentle persuasiveness of her nurse Amy, was indeed all that for awhile she was capable of doing.

THE YEAR'S JEWELS.

BY M. C. GILLINGTON.

AMETHYST: FEBRUARY.

Preserves from violent passions.

THE purple sap stirs deep in the hawthorn's breast:
It pushes and pulses up with divine unrest:
Slowly one day and swiftly the next, it rises,
Thrilling the sombre boughs with tender surprises—
Through every spray the new life trembles and heaves,
Till it bubble and burst to the light in a thousand leaves.

The purple buds that prick on the hawthorn spray,
Steady and still in the stress of the stormiest day,
Held in a leash by the hand of the wild spring weather,
Patient and calm, they stand and they wait together.
The first warm ray shall rend their chrysalis-husk—
For this, contented they wait through the dawn and the dusk.

O purple buds in your exquisite quietude,
Expectant there till the earliest sunlight brood,
Soft as a dream, on your lips in the olden fashion—
Mine be your faith and your hope! that no wind of passion
Shake to untimely fruition my heart's desire,
Till the lovely glance of the spring set the world a-fire!

Wanderer's Night Songs.

Words translated from GÖETHE *by* LONGFELLOW. *Music by* M. SCALÉ.

VOICE.

PIANO.

Allegretto.

p

Thou who from the hea-vens art, Ev-'ry

pain and sor-row still-est; And the doubly-wretched heart Dou - bly with re-fresh-ment fill - est. I am

sf *cres.*

wea - ry with contending With this rap - ture and un-rest: Peace des - cending, Peace descending, Come, ah,

dim. *cres.*

come in - to my breast! Peace des - cend - ing, Peace des-cend - ing, Come and reign with-in my

cres. *dim.*

Andantino.

breast! O'er all the hill - tops is

rall. *p*

qui - - et now; In all the tree - tops hear - est thou On - ly a

breath, On-ly..... a breath. The birds are a - sleep, a - sleep in the trees;

p

espressivo e dolce. *dim.*

Wait, wait, soon like these Thou, too, shalt rest, Thou, too, shalt

mf *mf* *mf* *espress.* *dim.*

sf *sf* *cres - - - - cen - - - - do.*

rest; Wait, wait,..... soon, soon like these..... Thou, too, shalt

mf *mf* *cres - - - - cen - - - - do.*

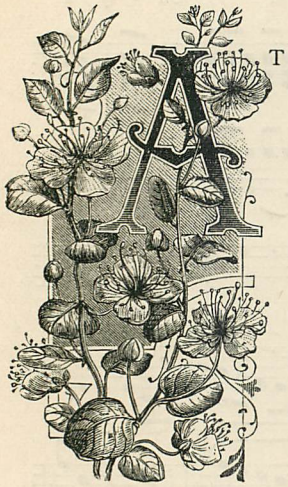
rall.

rest, Thou, too, shalt rest, Thou, too, shalt rest.....

rall. *colla voce.* *rall.* *pp*

HAD HE KNOWN.

A STORY OF NEW ZEALAND GOLD THIRST.



CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

AT midnight a light still burned in Mrs. Ingram's window. Her husband had not returned. In the morning he had told her he was going to the settlement, and she had seen him depart. As he was riding away, he had turned his head to smile at her, and had said, "I may have something to tell you when I come back—something of a surprise." All day she had been puzzled by these words. What it was he expected to hear in the settlement: what could have detained him all day and thus far into the night, she could not even imagine. It must be—she told herself sadly—only another part of the gigantic delusion, the impossible dreams in which he lived.

She went outside to listen, and was astonished to see that Ingram's horse was in the field, and that its saddle and bridle had been removed. He had come back; perhaps had been at home for some time. Frightened by this sudden discovery, she hurried round the house, hoping to find him somewhere about the place. There was no sign of him. In her desperate agony of fear, she ran a little way towards the creek, and cooeed loudly; then stood listening. It was so still, that the great under-current of little sounds, which we seldom hear, obtruded itself: the grating, chirping, and ticking of insect life, the grazing of cattle, the purling of distant springs, the quivering of a thousand leaves: it was as if one heard the pulse of Nature beat.

Again she cooeed, putting all her strength into the cry. There was an answer, a faint hollow voice, which seemed a mockery of her own, and from the bush a man emerged into the full moonlight of the open field. He came nearer the house, but every now and then zigzagged from the straight path, or stood stock-still, talking as people talk in their sleep. Yet it was—yes, alas! it was her husband.

"You are very late," she said. "I have been so anxious." He did not seem to grasp the meaning of her words, or to notice the anguish in her face, as, clinging to his arm, she tried to lead him into the house.

"Dearest," she said, "come in. It is late; you are worn out. Come; your supper is waiting for you." And still he maundered on, with a smile upon his face. No; let her come out and walk with him; he had something to tell her: a wonderful thing had happened; he was beside himself with joy. "Late!" he cried, with sudden remembrance of her words; "late or early doesn't matter now. We'll make a night of it; sit up till morning, and talk of old times, and sing the songs over again. For the days of mourning are ended, and you'll never, never be poor any more, my darling wife, never any more. Why are you crying? there is nothing to cry for now;" and with inexpressible tenderness he wiped the tears from her cheek.

"Oh, my Father, help me to bear it!" she cried, with her eyes lifted to the midnight glory of the heavens.

"No, I can't go in," he said, resisting all her attempts. Then, in a hoarse whisper, "We'll not talk loud; someone might hear. It's a mine of gold! I must watch it all night, or they would get it from me. Men are like devils when gold comes in their way! I've spies all round; but I'll cheat them yet!" Suddenly there seemed to be method in his madness. "Bring me something to eat," he commanded, in a clear, peremptory tone of voice: "something I can take with me." And anxious to humour him, she brought some bread and meat, which he took from her, and at first seemed inclined to eat; he must indeed have been hungry, for it was many hours since he had tasted food: long since he had eaten with a healthy appetite. But after swallowing a few mouthfuls, he muttered something about "having to go," and struck off at a swift pace in the direction of the bush. His wife stood watching for a moment; then, with a low wailing cry, which seemed torn from her very heart, followed him.

Up the creek, running like silver in the moonlight, the trees on its bank rising from shadows of inky blackness; further and further into the bush she went. And before her, with long swift steps, which she could never overtake, went that other poor tortured soul on whom the mystery of madness had fallen. Higher and higher yet, into deep shades the moonlight could not reach, the way steeper, rougher, narrower, till he stood at the foot of the bare cliffs, above whose worn and wrinkled brows gleamed the diadem of night: the crown of an eternal patience, sad and silent as Death.

Alone! in this solitude of rocks and trees, in a stillness which seems to be listening ever, and to which he pours out his troubled thoughts in endless ravings, calling to the solemn night, that answers only with the voice of stream and tree. So also he whose story, eighteen centuries old, has lost none of its pathos—the man "possessed by devils"—was always in the mountains and amongst the tombs, "crying and cutting himself with stones." The same agony, sobbing its heart out to an infinite silence; the same passion of insanity to escape the wondering stare, the insolent pity of mankind; to be alone—with Nature and with God.

Struggling painfully onward over the stony bed of the creek, thrusting her way through the matted vegetation, in thick darkness under the trees, Mrs. Ingram followed her husband until she could no

longer hear his footsteps, and was uncertain which way to take. Then she remembered that her two young children were alone in the house; the door wide open, and candle and fire alight. Back again she hurried on the rugged track, her face and hands scratched by the sharp twigs and thorns of the undergrowth, her feet catching against roots and stones, her dress wet and draggled with mud and water. Reaching home, she found everything as she had left it, the children sleeping in their cribs. She took off her wet boots and dress, and lay down on her bed, not to sleep, only to be quiet until morning came. But towards daybreak a merciful slumber closed her eyes.

Her children awakened her by climbing on the bed and talking to her. She could have taken them in her arms and sobbed aloud; but what was the good of it? what use to herself or them? The bitterest tears, the most persistent lamentations, were utterly inadequate to the measure of her grief. She had sounded the lowest deep of sorrow; there was nothing beyond, she told herself—nothing.

Fortunately, there was work to be done, and she went about it mechanically, finding some relief in active employment. Her boy and girl clung about her, laughing and prattling, and her motherly kindness would not allow her to be less cheerful with them than usual. They, poor innocents, should not be saddened even by the shadow of this misery, so far beyond their understanding.

The usual morning's work was done, breakfast was over—on her part, a matter of duty rather than inclination—and there was no return of the missing one. Again she walked a long way into the bush, and called her husband by name. There was no reply. She could not continue the search, leaving her children alone; she must go to her friends for help. She caught one of the horses, and harnessed him to a light cart: the only vehicle her husband possessed. Folding some rugs and shawls for the children to sit on in the bottom of the cart, she lifted them in, seated herself in front, and drove rapidly to the settlement.

Above all others, she had one friend here—Amy Burrit. She stopped at the hotel. Amy, who had seen her from the balcony, was downstairs in time to lift the children out, and taking a hand of each, to lead them into the house. She saw at once that Mrs. Ingram was in great trouble; no one could mistake the expression of her face.

"Is anything amiss?" she said. "You look so wan and tired. Let me take the children's bonnets off. There, Elsie and Arthur, run away to Maria in the kitchen, and ask her to give you each a cake. Quick! quick!" as the little ones pattered down the long passage. "Oh!" she exclaimed to Mrs. Ingram, "something has happened, I know, or you would not look at me so."

"Oh, Amy! Amy!" said the poor woman, and broken down by the first word of sympathy, she fell into her friend's arms, clinging to her with bitter sobs and tears.

"I frighten you," she said, when her passion of grief had worn itself out. "This does not hurt me; I shall be better for it. Last night I cried a little; but when he said to me, 'Why do you cry? there's nothing to cry for now,' and himself wiped my tears away, then an awful calm came over me; the fountain of my tears seemed to be dried up; I thought I could never cry again—never, over anything."

"Tell me all about it," said Amy, "and let me try to help you."

They sat down side by side, and the miserable story was told, Mrs. Ingram forcing herself to speak calmly. "I would have found him," she said, referring to her husband; "I would have searched every inch of the bush; only there were the children. I could not leave them."

"You must let your children stay here," said Amy. "Maria, our servant, will take care of them. I will go back with you—yes, I will!—and we must have someone who knows the bush. What a pity father is in Auckland; he would have gone at once. But there is Mr. Treloar: he is so kind-hearted, he will do anything for us, and will know better than anyone else what ought to be done. Now, I am going to give you some orders, and you must promise to obey me."

"Yes," said Mrs. Ingram submissively.

"You must stay here while I see Mr. Treloar. And I insist on you lying down in my room, and especially on your having some lunch. Remember, it is a duty."

"Oh yes; I can't afford to starve myself," said Mrs. Ingram bitterly.

Mr. Treloar was talking with a mining expert, who had been over the works, and was now extolling the capabilities of a remarkable machine, called a "Revolving Roaster." This was not, as some might imagine, a diabolical instrument of torture; but a useful agent in the treatment of what are very properly termed "refractory" ores.

"A young lady wants to see you, sir," said one of the men, who, like a stream of working ants, swarmed from end to end of the Company's buildings.

"A young lady!" said Treloar, while he of the "Revolving Roaster," looked expectant and curious.

"Much bothered with visitors?" he inquired.

"Don't allow ourselves to be," said Treloar. "Nothing like a system. I've one day for them; on others, 'No admittance except on business.' I made that rule, and it saves oceans of time."

Treloar made haste to wait upon the young lady. "Why, Miss Amy, is it you?" he said, shaking hands with her in his hearty way. "What can I do for you? Are you stricken with curiosity to see our battery pounding away, or the furnaces, and the retorted gold turned out of the crucible? Come along, then. It's not visitors' day; but for you I'll make an exception." Which shows the exact worth of a system in the hands of a good-natured man.

"Not to-day, Mr. Treloar," said Amy, smiling. "As if I would assist you in breaking your own rules! No; I came on very urgent business: to ask for your help in behalf of a friend of mine—Mrs. Ingram, who is in great distress."

"Mrs. Ingram?" said the manager. "I think I can guess the cause of her distress. I know her

husband, poor fellow! But let me hear the story, and I'll do what I can for you."

Amy told him, Treloar occasionally interrupting with sympathetic interjections. "Ah yes!" he said; "I knew he was hard hit. But, dear me! if we were all so sensitive, the country would be full of asylums; I myself should have been a lunatic half my days: I'm sure I've been disappointed and taken in often enough. He's no stamina, nothing to bear him up over the ups and downs of life. He's been to Logan once or twice with specimens from the reef he had found: a very rich one, he believed. There's some mystery about that; he's been duped, I'm certain, for the man himself is as honest as the day. The specimens were rich; but the stone he brought us to be crushed, a ton nearly, had nothing in it. When we told him that, he broke down; he had no spirit left. Last night I couldn't forget his face. And now, you say, the man is actually mad, and has been out all night in the bush, watching his claim, under the delusion that everyone is conspiring to take it from him. The extraordinary part of the thing is that no one knows where he found this reef—not even his wife. Well, he must be found: that's the first step. I'll get a few of the 'boys' together (by this he meant certain middle-aged and experienced miners), and go myself. If we don't come on him in twenty-four hours, his hiding-place must be an exceedingly queer one."

So swift was Treloar in his movements, that within the next two hours he and his party of miners were searching the bush above Ingram's farm. But the long summer afternoon waned and faded, the night came down, and the missing man had not been found.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

THEY could not find him. Before another day had passed his story was known from end to end of the gold-field, and numbers of miners had joined in the search. Up and down the hills, through gullies, creeks, and ravines, they hunted, until it seemed impossible that there could be a single grove of trees, a hole or corner anywhere which had not been thoroughly ransacked. Treloar, with all his knowledge of the bush, in which, he boasted, every tree was an old acquaintance, had to confess himself baffled, if not beaten. He forgot how ingenious is the cunning of insanity. Ingram knew that a determined attempt was being made to discover his retreat. It was his gold they wanted; if they succeeded in capturing him, they would possess themselves of that: he would be cheated and robbed. "But they'll find me a match for them!" the poor fellow congratulated himself; and a match for them he certainly was.

That no one might see where he had been working, he had heaped earth and stones and dead trees above the place, labouring like a giant in his frenzy, until the whole looked like a landslip from the cliff. Several times after this, those who were seeking him passed near by, but when he heard voices or footsteps he hid himself, crouching in the thickets of the undergrowth, or stealing away to some other part of the bush. After the first night spent in concealing his mine, he fancied he might relax his vigilance, and slept in one of the deserted cottages near the old mill. No one thought of looking for him there. His dog had found him out, and would not leave him. Knowing that the faithful creature must be with his master, Mrs. Ingram had derived some hope from the circumstance: he would go to and fro, and lead them to the place. But the dog—trained to a perfect obedience, and never leaving Ingram's side—was no easier to find than the man.

The first day Mrs. Ingram had insisted on accompanying the search party. "I must be there when he is found," she had said. Vainly had her friends, only too fearful of how he might be found, attempted to dissuade her. With Amy, who would not leave her, she had toiled on the weary endless way, seldom speaking, only keeping on and on. Again came the night, without sight or sound of the one she sought. Somewhere in the darkening bush her husband still remained, lost, perhaps, for ever. Despairing, exhausted, she could no longer drag herself onward, and had to be carried over the greater part of the homeward way.

On the third day of the search Burrit returned. He was in excellent spirits; the bill of sale was finally settled, and one or two other troublesome affairs had been disposed of for awhile. He hummed a tune to himself as he stepped briskly down the passage of the hotel, going straight to his wife's room.

To his surprise, he found her more than cheerful. The Ingram children were playing horses round and round the room, and she was leaning back in her chair, laughing at them.

"Hallo! are you trying to fancy yourself a grandmother, with these youngsters roystering about you?" said Burrit. "They seem to have done you good."

"These are Mrs. Ingram's children, poor things!" said Mrs. Burrit. "Amy begged me to look after them while she stayed with their mother in her trouble."

"What trouble? What's amiss at Ingram's?" said Burrit, a sickening presentiment of evil creeping over him.

Mrs. Burrit sent the children away while she told him. It was natural he should be shocked and agitated by the news, still she thought it affected him in an extraordinary manner: he seemed almost distracted.

"If I had known!" he cried: "if I'd only been here! Why, I've seen his reef; I found it by accident. It's right between the Sentinels, the most break-neck place on the range. Three days! He may be dead, or dying now. Who's out after him?"

"Everyone, nearly," said his wife. "They've searched the bush inch by inch. Mr. Logan was out all yesterday, and has gone again to-day; that foolish doctor even must go, though what use he will be I can't think; and he'll very likely get lost, then they'll have to look for him."

"And I must go," said Burrit.

"What, immediately, just when you've got home?

Do have something first. Maria will be bringing in tea directly."

"Do you think I can sit still in the house, and eat and drink, while that poor wretch is lost and starving? No! I may be bad enough"—and there was an angry bitterness in his voice which caused her to look at him in surprise—"but not so bad as that."

He hurried away at once. Within ten minutes Mrs. Burrit heard the clatter of his horse's feet as he cantered down the street. He rode to the foot of the range, left his horse at one of the miners' cottages, and walked up the hill into the dense bush. He pushed on in a straight line for the Sentinels, as far as existing roads and tracks allowed. It was near sunset when he stood on the brow of the precipice.

All the way thither he had been hunted and lashed by a fury of remorse. To this had he brought himself—he a man who, whatever his failings might have been, could until lately have said, with truth, that he had wronged and defrauded no one. If his neighbour whom he had robbed: who had been driven mad by his deception—if he should die, would he not always hate himself as little short of a murderer?

As always, the silence of the place was profound. What peace upon the heights, that were purpling with brilliant-hued reflections from the western sky of flame! What a solemn rest in the valley far beneath, where the streams went singing to the sea! Ah! and what a tumult of restless, hopeless sorrow in his own heart!

But hark! one sound. Not the screams of the parrots, flying high above him, not the soft cooing of the pigeons in the tree tops. No; a human voice. Very slowly he began to descend, careful not only because the way was dangerous, but also lest he should make the slightest noise.

The voice went on talking in one even tone—a strange jumble of ideas. "They've nearly given it up," Burrit heard. "Ay, they'll never find us here, will they, Grip, old friend? We're cleverer than they thought. And they don't know what we've got up yonder, Grip. Solomon never had such treasure! Why, this may be Solomon's mine; where's the proof he never sent to this part of the world for gold? Bah! Solomon would have cleared this out if he'd ever found it. And Solomon never was half so rich as they make out; the Jews always exaggerated about their kings, and they get out of the difficulty by saying everything was carried off to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar got it all, and Belshazzar drank it up and squandered it. What's that Egyptian's name? Rameses; no, though he was pretty rich. Oh! Rhampsinitus, he had a decent fortune, so had Crœsus, and Midas too; but he didn't find his, only juggled it out of other things, and he was sick of it in the end. None of them found it for themselves, and none of them could keep it. Ah, but I can keep mine!"

Burrit could see the speaker now, and note what a wreck he had become: how he had shrunk and wasted. His long and matted hair fell over his eyes—the restless wandering eyes of insanity—in which the pupil seemed to have lessened, the white grown larger. He sat on the bank near the pool, and the dog crouched beside him. Suddenly this latter lifted his head, which had been drowsily resting on his paws, and sniffed up the air. As if by the same animal instinct, the man started, raised himself, and stood listening.

"Ingram," said Burrit, advancing, "don't you know me? Come here, old fellow; they want you badly there."

"You villain! You have found me out!" cried the other man, and sprang at his throat, with a horrible cry—the cry of a wild beast rather than a man.

They were on the very edge of the pool, and there, locked in a desperate struggle, they staggered and reeled. There was but one way for Burrit to save himself from being strangled by this madman. With a violent effort he burst from those long sinewy arms, whose muscles seemed made of steel, and springing backward, plunged overhead in the water. Rising again, with a few strokes he gained the opposite side. Ingram could not swim; and here the pool was both wide and deep.

Ingram stood looking after him in a stupefied sort of way. From the opposite side of the pool Burrit addressed him again.

"Come now, Ingram, listen to me. No one wishes to hurt you. On my soul, no one shall lay a finger on your property! You'll die if you stay here. Your wife thinks you are dead."

"That's a lie!" returned the other. "She knows where I am."

"For God's sake!" said Burrit, "believe me. It's the solemn truth I'm telling you. No one wants to take your mine from you."

"God!" repeated the man in a tone of earnest reproach. "How dare you use the awful name? You——!"

And even at these words, spoken in ignorance of his offence, Burrit shrank and blenched.

"Come," he said again, "for your wife's sake and your little children."

Ingram laughed derisively. "I stay here for their sake. What have you to do with them?"

"Oh, man! man!" said Burrit despairingly. "Shall I bring your wife? Will you believe her?"

"She will not come," Ingram answered. "She knows you are a spy."

What good was there in parleying with this madman? He would have to leave him where he had found him. Sick at heart, Burrit began to descend the stream, and, until he had passed the bend, he saw Ingram, still in the same place, sternly watching him.

Night was at hand, gloomy and threatening. The sky had suddenly changed, and now came the first pattering drops of rain. Drip, drip, in slow succession, as one might count one, two, three; then swifter, swifter, till in one unceasing torrent the water poured down, blotting out the last gleam of day. "A night of it!" thought Burrit. "Lord, have pity on that poor wretch!"

In the darkness, plunging and splashing onwards,

he made his way out of the bush. He reached the old clearing, and to his surprise saw a light, which, however, went out presently. Another light, which went out also: someone striking matches, he thought. Then he heard voices from one of the buildings.

"Who's there?" he cried.

"Polcraft and I—Logan," answered a voice. "Is that you, Mr. Burrit?"

"Yes," said Burrit, joining them in their place of shelter. Polcraft struck another match, and the three were able to look upon each other's faces.

"So you are back again," said Logan, "and, like us, are out searching? You have heard all about this sad business?"

"Yes," said Burrit shortly. "I have seen him."

"What? Ingram!" the others exclaimed, as in one breath; while Logan added, in a lower voice, "Alive?" There was that in Burrit's manner which made him fear the worst.

"Alive!" said Burrit, almost with a groan; "but if I were as he is, and knew it, I should wish to be dead. I came on him suddenly; he gave a cry—the most awful I ever heard—and sprang right at my throat. Ah-h!" he shuddered, "I feel his long thin fingers clutching me now. Madness had given him the strength of ten. I was a child in his arms. We were on the edge of the pool. I broke loose, sprang into the water, and swam across: the only way to save myself."

"That was a terrible struggle," said Logan. "Are you hurt?"

"No; only a bit shaken. I feel queer yet."

"Ay, I knew you weren't all right by your voice," said Polcraft. "Hullo! what's this?"

Something black and wet and shaggy rushed past them. "A dog!—his dog!" cried Burrit. "What, Grip, old fellow, starved out, are you?" as the famished animal crouched and whined before him. "I tell you what: as the dog's here, the man won't be far off."

They went to the door. It was still raining, though no longer very dark. The moon was rising. No sound anywhere, except the monotonous drip, drip.

"Wait," said Logan; "a thought's struck me. Polcraft, come here, and light some more of your matches."

He knelt down on the boarded floor, and traced the footprints of the dog from the door into the inner room of the house.

"Now," he said, "these are not fresh marks; they are dry, and there are a great many of them, one above the other. The dog has been in and out several times. And here—another match, please; keep up the supply—are the marks of the iron plates and nails of a man's boots. Not mine, nor Polcraft's; we've not been into the other room. The marks continue right across the floor. Let us look in here."

They entered the other room. It was less than the first, and like it, had a small square window, from which the glass had been broken long ago. There were two bunks against the wall. In one of these they found a pick and shovel.

"His tools he's hidden here," Polcraft said. "Some of the stone from the mine has been stored in this room; there are bits of quartz, and gravel, and sand all over the floor."

In the second bunk were some sacks folded, which looked as if someone had lain on them.

"Evidently he's slept here," Logan said. "The dog has coiled himself up on the floor beneath; here are the marks where he has trampled round and round, as dogs do before lying down."

"Well," said Polcraft, "if they've had sense to come in other nights, they will on this. We've a chance now of catching that poor unfortunate. I don't believe you'll ever get him in the bush; he's too desperately cunning. But once he's in here, three of us ought to make sure of him. Perhaps, though, Mr. Burrit, you'd better keep out of his sight; you've had one tussle with him already. You'd better leave us to it."

"No; I'll not go," Burrit said.

"We may be able to manage it quietly," Logan said.

"Well, you'd be more likely to succeed with him than anyone," Polcraft replied. "He was awfully fond of you. But then, I don't know. He may be the other way now. Mad people's brains are topsy-turvy."

They waited, standing outside, close to the house wall, which sheltered them from the rain. From their position they had a view of the clearing, now well lighted by the moon.

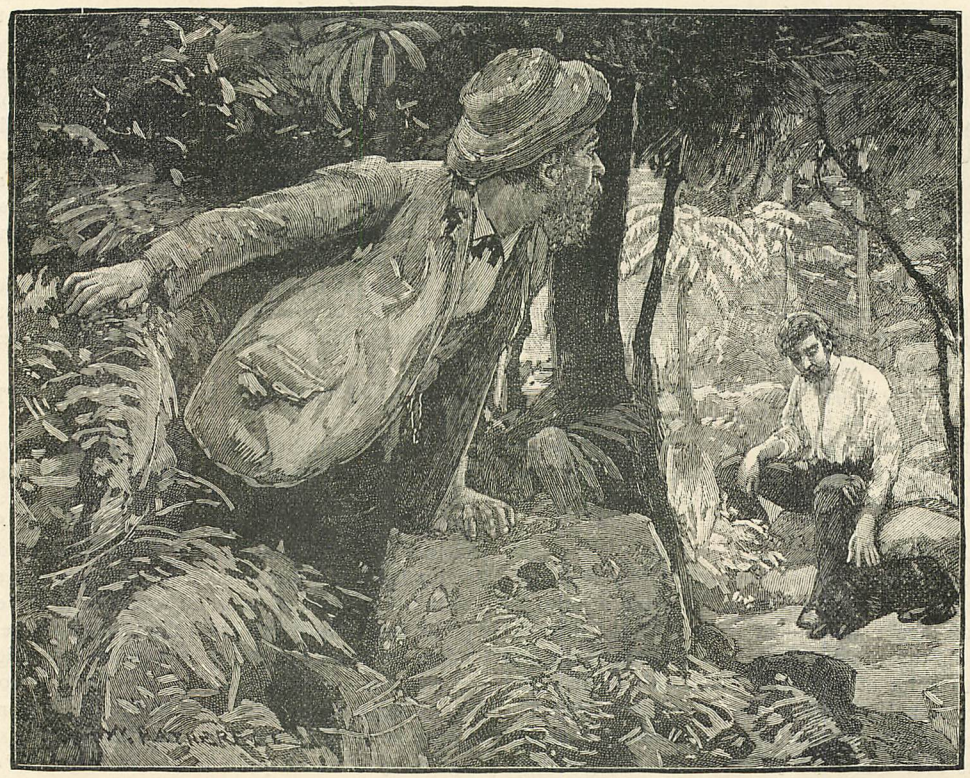
The dog had disappeared.

"Gone back to his master," Polcraft whispered. "When he comes again it will be with him. Hark!"

From afar came a sound easily distinguished from the falling rain: a sound of footsteps, sometimes crackling on dead twigs, sometimes grating on hard rock or splashing through water. A wearied, halting tread, that paused, and stumbled, and laboured along as a tired man might do. There was a voice speaking—a long, low monologue, which seemed endless. The footsteps were nearer, the voice louder, and on the edge of the stream the man came in sight. He kept on for a few yards; then, for some reason which probably seemed sufficient to his bemuddled brain, stood still, addressing a long harangue to some imaginary person on the other side of the creek, the rain beating pitilessly on his bare head and tattered garments, already soaked with wet.

"The dog isn't with him," said Polcraft. "Hush!" whispered Logan, "he's here. Why, he's coming from the opposite direction! Oh, someone else—" he stopped in surprise. Here was the dog making straight for the house, and behind him, struggling through the rain-drenched growth of the clearing, a woman. "Mrs. Ingram!" said Polcraft. "The dog's been home, and she's tracked him here."

The dog entered the house, the woman also. Neither had noticed Ingram, who had relapsed into silence, and was almost hidden by the bank of the creek, with its trees and bushes. In the shadow of the house, behind some close-growing shrubs, Logan and his companions were well concealed. They heard



"BURRIT COULD SEE THE SPEAKER NOW" (*p.* 155).

Mrs. Ingram walking about inside. She searched both rooms. "He is not here," she said aloud, and never had words so few expressed such abandonment to despair. "Oh, he is not here!"

In the first room she stood beside the fireplace, resting her arms upon the chimney shelf, her head upon her hands. The water dripped from her soaked dress and formed a pool on the floor. It dripped also from the heavy coil of her hair, which she partly untwisted and wrung dry between her hands. The dog crept beside her, and looked up at her wistfully, earnestly. "You know," she said; "you are sorry;" and she bent down and laid her face against his shaggy neck.

"Ought she to stay?" Burrit whispered.

"Yes," answered Logan. "There is no danger: we can keep near at hand. If anyone can persuade him, she will."

In their excited interest they were still watching the solitary figure by the creek side. At last he roused himself from his reverie, and began to approach the house, silently and slowly. His wife did not hear him till he had reached the door and the dog had sprung to meet him. Then she also pressed forward, and with broken, faltering words of amazement and delight—even as he was, ragged, drenched, bemired: the unseemly, pitiable wreck of his former self—took him in her arms, and sobbed and cried over him.

"Oh, my darling! you have come back? You will go home with me this night—this time you will. You are so cold and wet—so wasted and worn! Ah! I thought you were dead, and I should never find you again."

And the madness which was deaf to every other voice yielded to hers. "Yes," he said slowly, as in a dream, "it is cold and wet. Why are you here? Why will you cry so? I am tired—very tired; it is a long way to the place. To-night I will go home; but to-morrow you must come with me and see the gold."

"Yes, yes; I will go with you to-morrow," she promised.

"Dead? no, I am not dead," he went on, answering her former words. "He said you thought so, but I knew it was a lie. Why should I die now? He won't be there to-night, because of the rain. I don't mind it. But if you like, we will go home."

"Yes, we will go home," repeated his wife, her voice breaking into a sob. And leading him by the hand like a little child, the dog closely following, they left the house.

The three others had drawn away from the place. What part had they in this? They had only remained near to know the end.

"Well, now," said Polcraft, wiping his eyes, and turning to his companions, who perhaps were similarly engaged; "thank God, that's played out, and we too can go home!"

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

"AND how is he this morning?" asked Burrit of the doctor, who had just ridden in from Ingram's farm.

"As weak as a baby," the man of medicine replied. "Well that I was on the spot when she got him home! In every emergency a medical man should be at hand. I'd gone out yesterday, you know, feeling sure I should be wanted sooner or later."

"Of course," said Burrit. "Even in this healthy place we can't get on long without you."

"Went into the bush, like the rest," continued the doctor: "went alone; had always said it was idiotic to go more than one at a time: man sure to hear them blundering about, making as much noise as wild cattle, crashing through the underwood; and in some points no one so sharp as a madman. So I kept by myself, and trod as if on hot coals. Got into the most awful and extraordinary places you can imagine. Had to lie flat and crawl, or jump into the water and wade for a change. Then I began to walk on the trees."

"On the trees!"

"Dead trees, one on another, piled fifty feet high, I assure you; no exaggeration. Crossed a gully by means of them; they filled it up; nearly dropped through in the middle; trod on a rotten trunk and went into a lot of soft stuff filled with beetles and great grubs, pah! Got across that place; found I was lost; had to go back again; thought I should never get over that time. Began to rain; got dark. Lost again! Went on; saw a light. Ingram's house—and she was there!"

"She? who?" said Burrit. "Mrs. Ingram?"

"Oh, no. I beg pardon; yes, of course. Mrs. Ingram was there too," said the doctor, who, as usual, had referred to the object of his secretly-cherished passion without profaning her name: that was too sacred for common use.

"Mrs. Ingram and—and your daughter gave me tea, and made a tremendous fire. Dried myself. While doing that, dog scratches and whines at the door. 'It's Grip!' cried Mrs. Ingram, and flies to the door and opens it, and, I assure you, takes that big hairy black brute that I've longed to hang or shoot a dozen times"—the said dog had always manifested a great aversion for the doctor—"in her arms, and, yes—actually kisses it! Dog bounds off helter-skelter to the bush. She follows. So do we."

"By 'we,' do you mean yourself?" inquired Burrit.

"No—yes—that is, I was there too," admitted the doctor. "We couldn't stay in the house after that, you know. Mrs. Ingram waved us back, so we kept a little behind. She followed the dog to the old mill. Went into one of the houses. We waited; heard him come. When they came out hand in hand, I knew it was time to act; might be wanted. Rushed back to the house; was ready to receive them there."

"Glad to hear you assert yourself at last," said Burrit drily. "I never like to hear a man speak of himself as 'we.' What did you do with him then? How did you manage him?"

"Perfectly easy to manage," said the doctor. "They always are when you go the right way to work. Not often a man is all mad—mad on one point, perhaps half-a-dozen different points—but seldom mad all round the compass. In half-an-hour we had him sitting at the table with us, eating supper, washed and decently clothed, and in his right mind—while he kept off a certain subject, I mean. Talked very sensibly till someone mentioned something about mines. Went off into a long rigmarole directly; said he'd trust me; I wasn't a miner, so might be honest. He'd found a reef of pure gold, and was obliged to watch it day and night. Not only men leagued against him, but devils! Had fought with one that day. I suppose he meant you."

"Thank you, Doctor," said Burrit. "I suppose he did."

"Well," continued the doctor, "I sat up with him till two in the morning, he talking all the time—gold, gold, gold! Mentioned all the richest men of all ages, talked about fellows I'd never heard of. Saw no chance of it ever coming to an end. Interfered at last, reminded him I was a medical man; could see he was seriously in want of rest, and would be ill if he didn't go to bed. More important than ever now he should take care of his health: if he were laid up, might lose everything. He consented, on condition I would get up at break of day, and walk with him to the mine. I got some sleep on the sofa. In the morning saw him again. Just as I expected: too ill to get out of bed; no chance of him going to that mine for some time."

"And do you mean to say he's left there, with only the two women, his wife and my daughter, in the house?" asked Burrit rather angrily. "Last night, I understood from Polcraft, they had someone with them, or I should have stayed myself. He's a madman, whatever you may say, and may be violent at any time."

"Oh, but," said the doctor, looking horrified, "I thought of that, and a great deal more. Miss—ah!—Miss Burrit is perfectly safe. Some neighbours of Mrs. Ingram's—Mr. and Mrs. Brown—have been with her the last day or two, helping and looking after things on the farm. They've engaged to stay. The woman has been a hospital nurse, and therefore isn't quite so ignorant as most of her class; and the man is strong if he's nothing else. Under my direction they will do very well."

"And now," said Burrit gloomily, leaning across the bar counter, and looking the doctor in the face, "what will be the end of this? Will he be mad all his life? If so, he'd better die. He'd better have stayed in the bush, wandering about, getting weaker and weaker, till at last he lay down and fell asleep, to wake in his right mind and in a better world—there must be a better one somewhere, whatever sceptics say, to compensate such unfortunates for what they've suffered here: all the miseries, cruelties, and wickednesses this earth is full of. There's nothing to wonder at when now and then a man goes mad."

"Mr. Burrit," said the doctor seriously: "are you ill?"

"Not of anything you can cure," said his host. "I asked about Ingram. Will he recover, or is this curse to cleave to him all his life? But I suppose you'll tell me you don't know."

"That's just it," said the doctor: "I don't know. Look here,"—and his eyes brightened and he spoke rapidly—"the other day this man was as sane as you or I. To-day he is mad. Why? No one knows. Oh, of course, there are reasons—causes anyone might name. He's been troubled, starved, over-worked; he has forgotten how to sleep, or slept to have frightful dreams—the thing has been coming on and on, till he saw its shadow, and for horror of it, jumped into its very arms. Men have gone mad for fear of madness; they go mad for everything imaginable, and neither you, nor I, nor anyone else, can tell when, or how, or why they overstepped the line. Disease of the brain, one says—the blood-vessels haven't nourished it properly; the nervous system is unstrung, come to a dead-lock somewhere; the body is out of health, and the brain, the most sympathetic of its organs, suffers accordingly. Bah! yes; and what does that tell us, after all? I might put it into different words, longer ones, mystify you with scientific phraseology, and be no nearer the root of the whole matter—the thing we don't, perhaps can't, find out. Who can say why a man is mad in one part of his brain and not in another?—why a maniac ill of a fever may talk sense when other people would have been delirious—a well-authenticated case?—why a sudden shock, a terrible accident may restore a man to his right mind?—why a man may have a double life, be alternately sane and insane, forgetting one state of things as he passes to the other? Who understands hypnotism—the peculiar influence one mind may exert on another—the trances people fall into sometimes: the loss and recovery of memory? Who understands anything about the soul—the only thing, you know, we don't find in a dissecting-room? Yes," he ended, "we know precious little about disease of this sort. Sometimes it can be cured and sometimes it can't; sometimes it confines itself to one individual and dies with him; sometimes it visits the sins of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation, and may be further still."

"Is it in Ingram's family?" asked Burrit.

"No," said the doctor, returning to his usual manner. "I should say this was a case of over-work, worry, excitement, acting on a weak constitution, and all aided by very bad dinners. I find that Mrs. Ingram is a very poor cook. The husband of such a woman, if he has no money to hire servants for her or to fill her pantry full, must expect to suffer. With other things to help the matter on, I shouldn't even be surprised at him going mad."

The doctor, having said his say, turned to go upstairs to his own room.

"Stay," said Burrit. "Did my daughter say nothing about coming home?"

"I believe," said the doctor, wheeling round again, and pausing as if to consider, "she returns to-morrow."

"Oh," said Burrit, and began to wonder why the doctor always spoke of a certain young lady as "She," and of her and himself together as "We." But he had not much time to give to the consideration of this abstruse question, for almost immediately MacFergus entered, with a serious, if not an angry face.

"Burrit," he said, waiving the ordinary salutations of polite society, "what did you mean by telling me that you'd donated those specimens from the 'Happy Thought' to the Auckland Museum?"

"Did I say that?" questioned Burrit rather feebly. For a moment he had really forgotten what story he had invented to account for the disappearance of the specimens.

"Did you say that?" echoed MacFergus. "As your memory seems rather rusty, I'd better polish it up. When I insisted on knowing what had become of them, you acknowledged you'd changed the specimens: partly for a joke, you said; partly because you thought it was a pity such a handsome lot shouldn't be sent to the museum. You said every Company of standing had contributed to their collection of minerals: that you were ashamed of our stinginess in refusing to give anything: that to come down handsomely with a valuable donation would advertise us, show what stuff we had in the mine—and so on. You can talk a thing off, you know, Burrit; you always could. I was in town yesterday, and I thought, 'Now, I'll just go to the museum: never been there yet. I'll see how our specimens look in the show-case.' Well, they weren't there!"

"You mayn't be aware," said Burrit, "that they don't expose valuable gold specimens in a glass case. They'd be a perpetual temptation to people of a certain class. Of course, you wouldn't see them; they'd be safely stowed away in some drawer or box."

"What's the good of a thing in a drawer or box?" demanded MacFergus. "I shouldn't give a grain of gold to be used that way. If I made a donation, I should expect it to be put where it could be seen, and ticketed with the Company's name—and my own, of course. But I'm not exactly a duffer. I made inquiries of the head man. Never received anything from the 'Happy Thought!' Wished he had; and, I'm sorry to say, made me promise to give him something before I left. That's what I've lost by your bungling. I'm afraid your nice little fabrication breaks down. Now, what have you got to say?"

"MacFergus," said Burrit.

"Go on."

"You've always been bitter against me."

"Well, we've had words at times: that isn't to be denied."

"I'm going to give you the chance of saying something about me worse than anything you're likely to circulate on your own account. I took those specimens and made use of them for my own purposes."

"Oh, bless you, Burrit!" said MacFergus. "I knew that long ago. I knew you'd got them. But why? That puzzles me."

"Ah!" said the other man, with an impatient gesture, "why does one ever do wrong? I'd better

make a clean breast of it. I hate myself for what it's brought on others. It seems to me now the meanest, cruellest swindle any man could have deceived another with. I'd better punish myself by telling it to you rather than anyone else, for of course the story'll lose nothing in your hands, and it won't be long in travelling all over where I'm known. Before to-morrow night I shan't have a rag of character left."

"So that's what you think of an old chum, is it?" said MacFergus gruffly. "That's grateful and comforting, as they say of the cocoa. I'm mean enough to run round, telling everyone! Why, I've known it all along, and said nothing. Look here, Burrit: if this is how you go on, I think your character's a long way safer in my hands than in your own."

"But you've said harder things of me than any other man. You've hated me, almost."

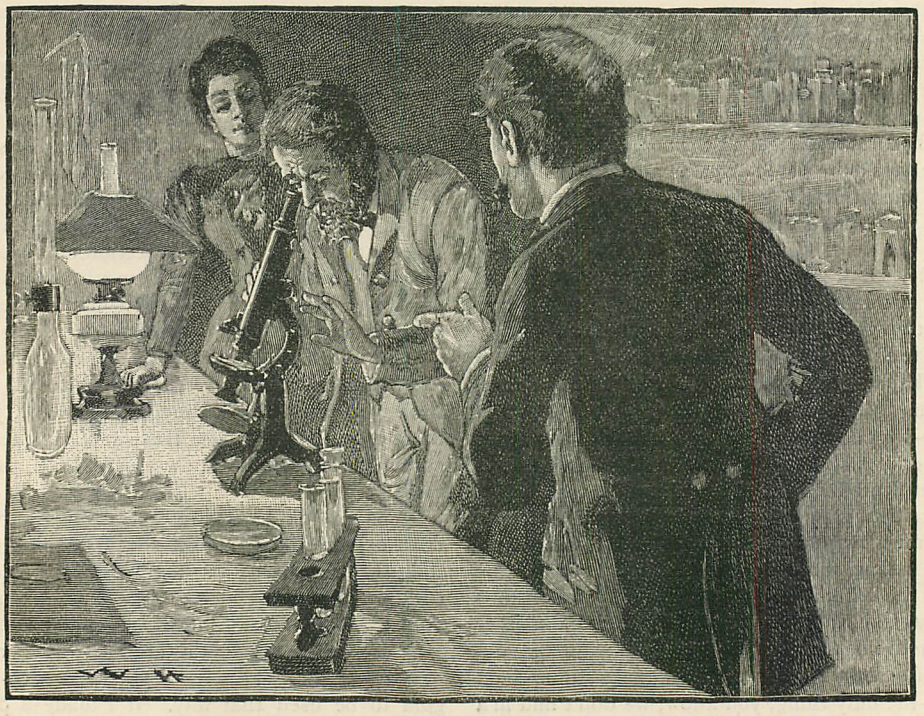
"Well, yes, I've said plenty against you," acknowledged MacFergus, "but I've said it to your face. That makes a mighty difference. As for hating you, why, Burrit, there ain't anyone I like half so much as you."

At this declaration of an affection he had never so much as suspected Burrit stood aghast, unable to utter a word.

"It's a fact. Of course we've quarrelled whenever we've had a chance. But I rather like a row with an old friend. My word! we kept things lively at some of the general meetings. The directors and the shareholders would edge together, and chuckle to see us pitch into each other. We could always get up a shindy; and what I liked about you was the way you answered back again, and gave as good as you got. Oh, no, I shan't spoil your character. I shall still continue to speak highly of you to everyone I know."

"I'd rather you'd tell them what I am—how mean and low!" said Burrit angrily. "You're sneering at me, with all this."

"You're a very old friend of mine, Burrit," returned the other; and his rugged face softened as if under the influence of some emotion. "You've forgotten your little girl, perhaps? I haven't. Many's the time she's sat on my knee. I've always had a soft place in my heart for that blessed child. I'm not likely to tell tales about her father, grieving her and disgracing her name. Then there's your wife. I hope it's no offence to say I think a long way too much of her to go about blackballing her husband. In the old times she was very good to me. When I was home-sick and lonely, when I'd lost my wife and child, she came and comforted me like a sister. And there's things about yourself, Burrit, that I remember: things you can't wipe out anyhow. No, no; I don't know what you did with the gold, and I won't know. I won't let you tell me. But just a word of caution—I came for that—don't meddle with this sort of thing again. It's always found out, you see; and another man who didn't hate you quite so much as I do mightn't be so particular about making the thing public. Shake hands!"



"'I SEE WHAT IT IS,' BURRIT SAID, FUMBLING ABOUT WITH THE MICROSCOPE" (*p.* 162).

A hearty squeeze followed this. As a shaker of hands, MacFergus was feared, and, I am afraid, often avoided.

Burrit hung his head, too crushed and ashamed to look the other man in the face.

"I think," he said slowly, in a low voice, "you've lashed me pretty severely. Every stroke has told. But it seems I gain, in spite of all. I can't dye myself so black that you won't paint me white again. I've one friend more, one enemy less, than I ever thought. Thanks, old fellow, for the sake of the wife and the little girl!"

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

AMY was no longer with her friend. She had returned home. The hotel was itself again, and the heart of the doctor bounded for joy. For a week he had not tasted a well-cooked dinner. Every morning his porridge had been smoked, his mutton-chop burnt, his egg either raw, or hard as a cannon-ball. All this was changed, and in addition, a certain step was heard about the house, a certain voice; a certain face looked upon him, or more often was looked upon by him. His spirits rose by leaps and bounds. At night, sitting in Logan's room, he allowed some of his joy to bubble over.

"I may not have to wait nine years, after all," he said.

"Indeed?" said Logan, not very attentively.

"My prospects are heightening." The doctor had four patients, none of whom he could reasonably expect to pay him. "I shall apply for a position at the Auckland Hospital, and I feel very confident of getting it. Make myself known, then go into practice on my own account."

"I thought the hospital had just got a new man?"

"He'll not be there for ever. Every three months there's a row, a resignation, and a turn-out."

"Not a very desirable situation, I should think."

"All depends on who gets it. Hospital Boards, like everything else, can be managed. *I* should keep in."

Silence. Deep meditation of the two friends.

"Doctor?" said Logan.

"Yes?" said the doctor briskly.

"Do you remember the first time you told me of these plans of yours, formed nine years beforehand?"

"I remember you being very peppery about it," said the doctor. "Well? Have you formed similar plans?"

"Well—yes," admitted his friend.

"Do they clash with mine?" A horrible suspicion flashed across the doctor's brain.

"I'm afraid they do."

"Are you going to wait nine years?" demanded the doctor.

Logan laughed. "Don't be cruel with me, Doctor. I'm not so young as you. You have the advantage of me by a whole decade."

The doctor actually trembled while putting the next question. "You—you haven't—there's nothing certain yet?"

"Oh no."

He breathed a sigh of relief. "Well, it was only fair of you to tell me."

"After you had been so frank with me, I could do no less."

"Of course," the doctor continued, as if reasoning with himself. "I couldn't prevent others from thinking as I do."

"No, I don't see how you could."

"And we needn't be offensive to each other. We may still be friends."

"Offensive! I hope not. I know the value of a friend too well, Doctor, to be in a hurry to part with one."

"That's right!" said the doctor, grasping his friend's hand. "After all, it's only what might have been expected. A man couldn't live in the same house with her, and not come to that, unless he were an extinguisher."

At this moment the doctor was called away to perform the operation of tooth-extraction on a young gentleman in great distress, who, with his face tied up so that only one eye and a part of his nose were visible, was waiting in the hall downstairs. There was no dentist in the settlement.

"If there's anything I hate, it's dragging out teeth," said the doctor. "It's nasty, it's disgusting; it can be managed by any fellow with a pair of pincers. But I'll do it. I do anything. I'm a regular scavenger."

The doctor having gone, Logan applied himself to the work which had been interrupted by the conversation just related. In a saucer on the table was some fine sandy earth, with specks of gold amongst it. Some of these specks he placed on a glass slide, and put it under the microscope. He was adjusting this to the proper focus when someone came upstairs, and passed the door of his room. He knew the step for that of his host, and going to the door, called him in. "I have something here which will interest you, Mr. Burrit," he said. "As an old miner, you must know something about 'salting.'"

It struck him that the man turned white immediately. But there was a curious light on the landing: bright moonshine from the open balcony door and the gleam of the lamp from his own room. It was only fancy.

"Salting?" said Burrit. "Oh yes, there's plenty of that on most gold-fields."

"Look at this gold I have under the microscope," said Logan.

Burrit's sinking heart told him at once what gold this was. He was asked to inspect the evidence of his own guilt. He dared not refuse, and turned to follow Logan into the room.

Just then Amy came out of a room on the opposite side of the landing. She also had heard her father come upstairs, and guessed that he was seeking her.

"Did you want me, father?" she asked.

"I did; but never mind now," Burrit answered.

"Mr. Logan wishes me to look at some gold he has under the microscope."

"Some gold?" Amy repeated. She looked interested, and Logan said: "Will you see it too, Miss Burrit? You have seen gold before through my microscope, but this is something out of the common way."

"You don't care to look, do you, Amy?" Burrit said, feeling sick at the thought that he must examine this gold and hear the assayer comment on it in the presence of his own daughter.

"I should like to see it," Amy said.

She was the first to look through the microscope. Certainly this was remarkable gold; not water-worn, smooth and rounded, as alluvial gold should have been, but in glittering threads and spiral coils, some of them fretted on the edge, and all sharp and clear-cut as with some instrument. No one would suppose that they had been washed and ground and rolled about in the bed of a mountain stream.

"Don't you notice some peculiarity about this gold, Miss Burrit?" asked Logan.

She seemed to hesitate before answering. "Yes, it is quite unlike other gold you have shown me."

"Unlike any gold I ever saw," said Logan. "But with a sovereign and a file, I could soon make some exactly like it. You haven't seen it, Mr. Burrit. You'll notice some pieces which actually show the milled edge of the sovereign. I suppose the man who wasted twenty, or perhaps ten, shillings over this never thought his work would be put under the object-glass of a microscope. No detective equal to that! He thought himself very clever, no doubt; but it's a clumsy fraud, after all."

"Yes, yes, I see what it is," Burrit said, nervously fumbling about with the microscope.

"Perhaps you've got it out of focus," Logan suggested. "Just regulate it to suit yourself."

"I can see it well enough," Burrit replied.

"Do you notice the milled edges?" Logan asked again.

"Yes," said Burrit huskily. Why would this man keep him on the rack?

"I suppose I can venture to tell you where it came from. I took that from one of the samples your unfortunate friend Ingram sent me. I believe I was absent at the time, and you took charge of them."

"Yes, I remember," said Burrit, still looking through the microscope. He felt unable to lift his face from it, as though he were glued to the hateful instrument, which had fixed its piercing eye upon his guilt, and which by some mysterious power forced him to look upon it also, while even on his bronzed face the blush of shame burned a deep dull red.

"One can't suspect Ingram of such a thing," Logan continued.

"No; he was the soul of honesty," said Burrit. At last he had got his eyes away from that torturing microscope.

"Yes; everything goes to prove that, so far from being a deceiver, he was himself deceived. Who can have imposed on him, and for what purpose, it's impossible to say; but I confess I should like to know and expose the scoundrel."

There was a dead silence. Logan felt that there was something strange in this. He looked from one to the other of his two companions. The profile of the girl standing beside him might have been cut in marble: it was fixed in such an expressionless, unnatural calm. Her eyes were searching her father's face with a strained, anxious gaze. Burrit looked downwards, and his restless hands folded and re-folded a corner of the table-cloth. The situation began to be painful. What had he done? Logan asked himself. Unwittingly he had stumbled on a discovery—a most unhappy one.

It was Amy who broke the silence by the first remark that suggested itself; the most foolish words seemed better than none. "After all," she said, addressing Logan, "you haven't shown us anything out of the common way. I'm disappointed! Only threads of gold, which you acknowledge anyone can produce with a sovereign and a file."

"I'm very sorry," said Logan, admiring her self-possession. "The next time I ask you to look through the microscope I will take care to have something marvellous."

"When you've discovered it yourself," Amy said, with a laugh. "Father, let us leave Mr. Logan: he is impatient to begin filing a sovereign. I am sure he will not rest till this has been proved by experiment."

He was alone; and again he was not alone, for Amy re-entered. He rose from his chair, and in some surprise advanced to meet her.

"Mr. Logan," she said, "I have something to ask of you. It is only a little thing, but it means a great deal to me—to others as well. I shall seem very bold to you, but that cannot be helped."

"If it is anything I can do—" Logan began. He was standing beside her now in the middle of the room, and he wondered at the nervous agitation of her manner.

"It is something I wish you not to do!" she cried impulsively: "never, never to say a word about this gold! I can give you no reason, I shall never tell you why I ask; I only beg of you to let the matter rest where it is. To make it known will do no good; it can only cause great misery."

"To you? You will tell me that, at least? Will this misery fall on you?"

"Ah!" she said, and there was a pathetic earnestness in the direction of her gaze, the pleading tone of her voice; "if it were only myself, I should not ask. I could bear it. But if you care for that, it will fall on me heaviest of all."

"If I care!" She lowered her eyes; she could no longer look him in the face. "If it is you who will have to suffer, I am bound to secrecy. Shall I tell you this?—before you came I had resolved to do what you wish: let the matter rest where it is."

She coloured deeply. "Then I need not have asked?"

"I am glad you did. I promise you that unless you give me leave I will never speak of this—never in any way let it be known. You can believe my word?"

"I am sure you would never break a promise," she said.

"And now," he said, going quickly to the table, and taking up the parcel of sand, "let us get rid of this, the cause of all the mischief."

He stepped out of the French window, and she saw him scattering the sand with its specks of gold over the balcony into the street.

"Oh!" she said, "this is more than kindness. And I can never tell you why I asked. I can only say, 'Thank you.'"

It seemed natural that she should give him her hand—a thin little hand, which trembled in his grasp. She could be brave for others, he thought; for herself she was as timorous and emotional as other women. To her, it may have seemed a liberty, yet it was with chivalrous respect that he bent over her hand—rougher and browner than his own—and kissed it. She was startled and ashamed, and the rustle of her white dress, the sound of the closing door, told him that he was again alone.

END OF CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

THE CONTENTS OF A HAIR-TRUNK.

LONDON & PARIS
Dresses of the Year 1801.

THIS old hair-trunk, studded with brass nails, has seen better days and done good service. In size and shape it is very different from the Saratoga trunks and big dress-baskets we use; but when it was new, sailing-vessels and stage-coaches were the common means of locomotion, and it was impossible to carry much luggage.

Let us lift the lid and examine its contents. They are mostly children's toys. Who were the children who first played with them we should like to know. It is difficult to guess; but as we turn over one thing after the other, we come to the conclusion that the little hands which first held them have passed middle age and old age, and are now lying quiet in the grave. It is rather a sad thought—that our belongings remain here after we are gone, and pass into hands which knew us not. But let us look at the toys.

First of all, we take out two small boxes of pink and green card-board, with gold edges that in spite of the lapse of time remain untarnished. They are labelled "Le Physionotrace," and probably were, with a case which lies beneath them, brought home to the children after some trip to France. Inside the boxes is a piece of pasteboard, with the head of a man depicted on it in the one box, and in the other a woman's head. In each picture there are several slits in which to put different noses and eyes, chins, wigs, and hats, of which a good assortment lies in the box beneath the picture. Thus the young woman with the classical coil of hair and a Grecian nose, can be turned into an old maid, with a sharp nose and double chin, lace cap and curled front; or, again, she may appear as a hawk-nosed dowager, with a yellow coal-scuttle bonnet, tied with a broad pink ribbon. The gentleman, too, undergoes similar metamorphoses; he sometimes wears a high beaver, and sometimes puts on a blue shako.

The case of which we spoke before, contains two small books, called respectively, "Delphine" and "Emma"; Emma is the good girl, Delphine the spoilt child. The peculiarity of the books lies in the illustrations, which are loose, and have movable heads which can be exchanged from one picture to the other, with, of course, a most ludicrous result. For instance, if we take Emma's smiling face, and crown

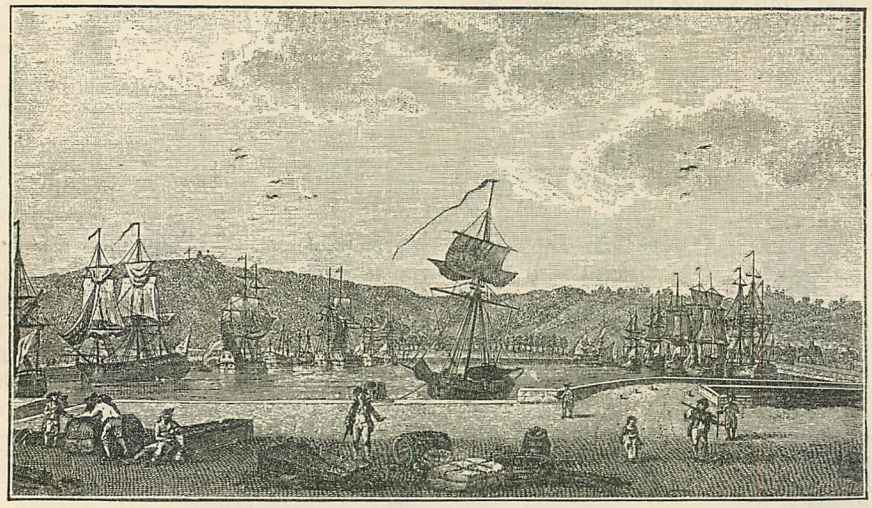
DRESSES OF THE YEAR 1789.

with it the figure of "Delphine en pénitence," she looks like a martyr; or if we take the mourning bonnet and veil, and place it on top of Emma's bridal dress, we have an odd combination; and just before us we have "Emma richement mariée," wearing Delphine's cross face, and so looking neither satisfied nor happy at her rich marriage. The style of dress worn by Delphine and Emma belongs to the first years of this century; low bodies, short sleeves, short —we might almost say no—waist, skimpy skirts, with tucks or tiny frills, and large bonnets with big ostrich feathers. How many little people have been made happy by these simple figures!

The three boxes which we next take out, were evidently precursors of the Kindergarten method. They are called "Toys for Teaching in Sport"; and from a label attached to one of them we find that the Spelling, Grammar, and Figure boxes in one cost £1 7*s.*, but that separately the price of the Grammar and Figure boxes in one was 16*s.*, and the Spelling box alone 10*s.* 6*d.* There was a book bound in red which accompanied them, and contained "Hints and Directions for the Proper Management of the Scheme"; the book has not come down to us, so we have not an idea what the scheme was, but feel sure that if there was not much teaching, there was plenty of amusement for the little folks in the Spelling and Grammar boxes, though the contents of the "Figure Box," seem to contain much drier matter.

In the Spelling box there are alphabets of several various kinds, Roman, Black-letter and Italian, small letters and capitals. In the Grammar box there are similar card-board squares, with the different verbs, pronouns, adjectives, articles, etc.; but, no doubt, the study of the nouns was the favourite lesson, for the nouns have a "cut" on the back of each square. From some of these cuts we can pretty nearly fix the date of the toys. Here is a "Beef-Eater" about three-quarters of an inch high, but the crown and "G. R." are quite distinguishable on his coat. "Papa" wears a cocked hat and knee-breeches. "Mamma's" costume is somewhat hid by the baby she holds on her knees; but nurse, who has a child in leading-strings before her, wears a mob-cap or bonnet, and a little bunched "pannier," which possibly may not have been quite the latest fashion.

The First-of-May trophy has a milkman and milk-maid dancing in the background to the music of a fiddler. The trophy is very similar to one in "Hone's Every Day Book," under which are the following lines:—



VIEW OF THE HARBOUR OF CHERBOURG (ABOUT THE END OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY).

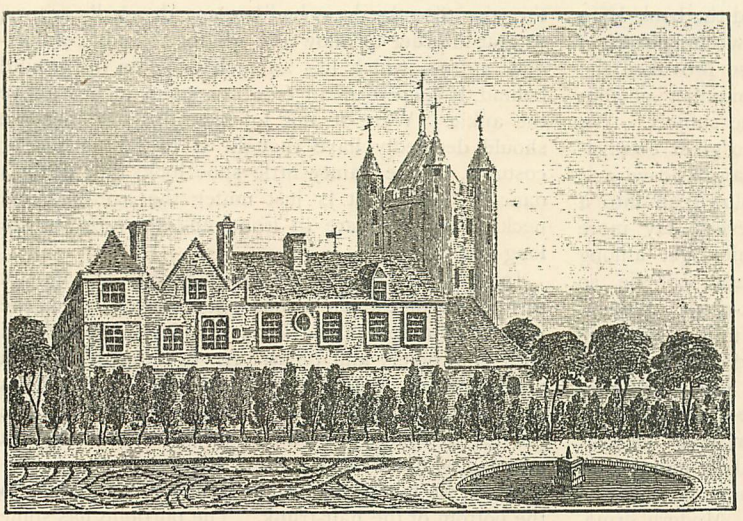
"In London thirty years ago,
When pretty milkmaids went about,
It was a goodly sight to see,
Their May-day pageant all drawn out.

Themselves in comely colours drest,
Their shining garland in the middle,
A pipe and tabor on before,
Or else the foot-inspiring fiddle.

They stopped at houses, where it was
Their custom to cry 'Milk below!'
And while the music play'd, with smiles,
Join'd hands and pointed toe to toe."

There are some more verses, but they are foreign to our purpose. At the foot is the date 1825. Thirty years before would take us into the last decade of the eighteenth century, and I do not think we should be far wrong if we place the manufacture of these toys to the same date, or perhaps even a few years earlier.

Several objects depicted on these cards are things of the past; Sedan chairs have vanished, so also have the elaborate tent-beds. It is difficult to recognise the forerunner of the modern fire-engine in the very clumsy machine depicted; and the umbrella is a



THE TEMPLE AT PARIS, 1793.

heavy-looking article, evidently ribbed with whalebone.

Besides the small cards with the cuts to teach nouns, there are two sets of larger engravings. One set has pictures of ships; a coach stopped before an inn, the landlord of which is handing them a pot of beer; a fort, and some rural scenes. It is difficult to guess at what they were intended to teach. The second set represents various games. We may notice that the boys and girls play separately. The girls have a swing between two very rickety-looking trees; they dance *vis-à-vis* with extended skirts; play ball, teetotum, blind-man's-buff, and cards. They look rather old in their skirts, which touch the ground; but still they are not above nursing dolls, or having a turn at acting school-mistress, when, no doubt, the possessor of the birch rod had it all her own way.

The boys of to-day would look with scorn on some of the games which amused their great-grandfathers. Tops were in favour, kites and hoops were not scorned, leap-frog was not vulgar, and battledore and shuttlecock was a boys' game. We doubt whether it was very prudent to allow those boys to shoot with bows and arrows, as they seem to be rather inclined to shoot at each other, but *that* may possibly be due to the exigencies of the cut. What boy in a tail-coat would, nowadays, condescend to mount a rocking-horse! No doubt boys were boys just as much then as now, and threw zest and spirit into these games.

Ah! here is a treasure. A doll dressed in a sprigged muslin, with leg-of-mutton sleeves and skimpy skirt, and, best of all, wearing a primrose-satin coal-scuttle bonnet. Examine her garments; the stitches would pass muster in the "Sixth Standard." How neat and well-made are her clothes, and finely marked with "Emily" in red cotton. She is even furnished with a little pocket-handkerchief. "Emily's" hair is light brown, done up in short curls; she is somewhat pallid, but it may be that the close atmosphere of the hair-trunk has impaired her constitution, and her roses have vanished. Lay her back carefully in the little doll's trunk studded with brass nails, where she rests peacefully, untouched by the destructive fingers of this generation, to whom dolls are only a passing pleasure.

Here is a doll's dinner-set; it belongs to very much the same date as the other toys. On the soup-tureens and vegetable-dishes, the sauce-boats and plates, are figures in the pseudo-classical costumes of the First Empire. The figures are in purple monochrome, and a rim of blue borders the plates, etc.

This scrap-book is in a very dilapidated condition, though it probably is not as ancient as the toys; and was evidently at first the album of some young lady, for there are numerous slips of coloured paper, or white paper with a coloured border, on which are written, in a fine Italian hand, riddles, conundrums, *bon-mots*. As we have all been thinking and talking of the census, perhaps some reader may be able to supply the missing answer to the following:—

"A Belle conversing with a beau,
Asked, all at once, 'What age are you?
What age meant he to let her know—
In saying, 'What in all you do'?"

The modest young lady, you will remark, uses a capital "B" for Belle, and a small "b" for beau. Here is another extract of the Beau and Belle style:—

"An *Elderly* man, named Page, was much in love with a *young* lady, and to declare his passion he sent this verse with a pair of gloves:—

'If from Glove you take the letter *G*,
Then Glove is Love, and that I send to thee!'"

* * * * *

She sent the following answer in return:—

"If from Page you take the letter *P*,
Then Page is Age, and that won't do for me!"

ANOTHER OLD-FASHIONED PLATE (*undated*).

Most of the pictures that once adorned the book have been torn out, but there remain a few engravings of ladies in the enormous hoops which so provoked the ire of the *Spectator* that a whole number of that paper in July, 1711, was devoted to the subject. We read that: "The fair sex are run into great extravagancies. Their petticoats, which began to heave and swell before you left us, are now blown up into a most enormous concave, and rise every day more and more . . . Should this fashion get among the ordinary people, our public ways will be so crowded that we should want street-room. Several congregations of the best fashion find themselves already very much straitened; and if the mode increase, I wish it may not drive many ordinary women into meetings and conventicles. Should our sex at the same time take it into their heads to wear trunk breeches (as who knows what their indignation at this female treatment may drive them to?), a man and his wife would fill a whole pew." Modern crinolines were bad enough, but hoops were still more extensive, if we may trust the pictures in this scrap-book. In some cases the width of the lady exceeds her length.

This leather-bound volume, handsomely stamped in gold, once had plated clasps, but of them only the hinges remain. It is another scrap-book, the contents of which do not equal the expectations raised by the cover; still some of the pictures are interesting.

An engraving of Mr. H. Greathead's life-boat going out to assist a ship in distress bears the date 1803; needless to say, the crew have no cork jackets. The odd thing about the picture is that the life-boat seems in imminent peril of being engulfed by a huge wave, but the ship in distress is surrounded by perfectly calm water. A print, dated March, 1793, shows "The Temple at Paris"; it was on the 21st of January in that very year that Louis XVI. left the Temple to be guillotined on the Place de la Révolution.

A view of the Harbour of Cherbourg is dated a few years earlier; it looks a quiet little place, very unlike the great naval station it now is.

Perhaps the most interesting prints are some fashion plates. A few of them have the date printed below them; of these the earliest is 1787, and the latest 1822. Between those two dates it is probable most of the fashions are represented.

In 1787 the hair was worn elaborately curled, and surmounted by three large ostrich-plumes. The skirts were plain but full, the bodice crossed over the front in folds, and the sleeves are puffed to a little below the elbow, and terminate in a deep frill. By the year 1801 the dress had become decidedly scanty, so that in order to allow the wearer to walk comfortably, a dress, which lies an inch or so on the ground behind, is looped up in front to some inches above the ankle. Were it not for the gipsy bonnet, we should decidedly have thought it to be an indoor costume, as the dainty little shoe looks only fit for a dance. The waist is just under the arm-pits, the neck is open square in front, and the sleeves are long and tight.

In 1819 the coal-scuttle bonnet appears, and though the bodice of the dress has not changed much, the skirt is of a reasonable fulness, and prettily adorned with embroidery and tucks. An evening dress for a young girl, in 1822, is very pretty; the short sleeves are puffed, the bodice has lengthened a little, and is pointed in front; the hair is curled *au naturel*, and adorned with a small wreath of roses.

When we take out this portfolio we have come to the bottom of the hair-trunk. The portfolio has some family silhouettes, and some English and foreign views.

In the picture of Westminster Bridge, taken in 1751, there is a background of green hills. The old Houses of Parliament present a very different appearance from the new buildings, and the absence of the Victoria Tower makes the Abbey appear more imposing. Another view, of the same date, shows London Bridge crowded with houses; below the Bridge lie the large ships, but above, only skiffs and barges can be seen.

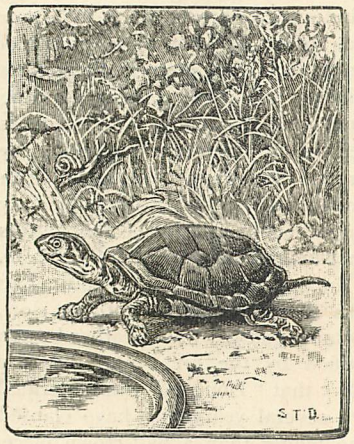
At the first glance, this view of the High Street, Oxford, is very puzzling to those who know that most charming thoroughfare; but a little study reveals the fact that the plate has been reversed, and so when looking up towards Carfax, instead of St. Mary's and All Saints being on the *right* hand, they appear in the print on the *left*. In front of Carfax Church stands the Conduit, which was erected by Otho Nicholson, in 1610, to furnish the city with pure water. It was removed in 1787, and presented to Earl Harcourt, who re-erected it at Nuneham, where it may still be seen. Numerous signs hang from the houses—not all, we hope, public-house signs.

The undergraduates who are standing about wear gowns nearly touching the ground, bands, wigs, and broad-brimmed hats with very shallow crowns. They belong to a generation which did not go in for boating and athletics.

Let us replace the things in the box; in another few years they will have become curiosities, and be thought worthy of some museum.

MY FRIEND DOUGLAS.

BY FRANK FINN, B.A., F.Z.S.



"NO haughty feat of arms I tell" in depicting the humble individual who forms the theme of my discourse; in fact, as he is not an energetic personage by any means, feats of any kind, bellicose or otherwise, are not to be expected of him. He spends his blameless days in meditation—mindful, perhaps, "of his lost love and far-off home." His appearance, indeed, might be thought to indicate ill-health of body or mind, for a blotchy yellow skin and a stony glare from watery yellow eyes suggest that "mysterious disease" which, according to the advertisement of a certain patent medicine, is always "creeping upon us." Add to this a wide and waistless figure and large flat feet, and it will be easily understood that not even his most intimate friends can call my hero's appearance prepossessing. When, however, I say that he rejoices in a tail, and carries his very much attached residence about with him, it will be suspected at once that my bilious-looking friend, despite his high-sounding appellation, is only a tortoise. And so he is—a European terrapin, or water tortoise, not distantly related to the friend of Brer Rabbit, who was, as we all know, one of the very few of that wily rodent's long-suffering acquaintance who managed to outwit him. And in some respects he even reminds one of a still more distinguished member of the house-bearing family: the snapping turtle, victim of the "Arkansas tooth-pick" of the intrepid Slingsby. He does not, however, hail from the States, like these famous relatives of his; but from some part of Southern Europe, which, I cannot say, as his kind's range is a wide one. Somewhere, however, he was kidnapped, and transferred to the care of a London dealer in pets, furred, feathered, and scaly. Ransomed thence, he has settled down peaceably in a garden in the south of England, which, affording him as it does sunshine, shade, and bathing accommodation, he is not at all anxious to leave.

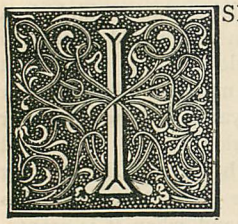
A small stone basin has been sunk in the ground for his ablutions, which, it must be confessed, leave him rather dirtier than before, for his speckled shell gets covered with fine dirt, only to be removed with a nail-brush. To this he entirely objects; and no wonder, for his backbone being the roof tree of his portable abode, his poor nerves must be sadly jarred by the process. This same coating of Mother Earth makes him rather difficult to see when he is in request, which is pretty often, as his points and properties are constantly being shown off to visitors. His objections to this interference with his repose are, no doubt, modified by the meal which follows it. For though his appetite does not demand alligators and authors to satisfy it, his capacity for accommodating animal nourishment is by no means to be despised. Unlike that peaceful browser, the land tortoise, which is too often hawked about on barrows, and bought, under the influence of the wild idea that it will destroy "blackbeetles," he firmly rejects a vegetable diet. Instead, he devours raw meat or worms to an alarming extent—for there appears to be no provision in his frame for expansion, till it is seen that his breastplate and carapace are not absolutely soldered together, but "give" a little. His meals are generally taken in the evening, when, if the sun has nicely taken the "chill off," he resorts to his bath, and waits, with his head out, for someone to come and feed him: for he makes a point of always taking his food in the water. All night long he remains in the enjoyment of a luxurious soaking, and may be encountered next morning trudging along the path to his retreat among the vegetable-marrows. There he proceeds to lie flat in the sun, his head erect, and his wrinkled yellow throat heaving slowly, in that placid enjoyment of *dolce far niente* which reptiles exhibit to perfection—one might almost think it a legacy from the old times, when "the world went very well," and doubtless very slowly. As for special exercise, "Douglas" has as much contempt for it as any southerner; the dozen yards' walk to the water is quite enough for him, varied by an occasional expedition along the south border. Like Gilbert White's celebrated tortoise, he does not care for too much sun, and on the other hand, when it is scanty, knows enough to tilt his shell to catch what warmth there is. Whether, like that historical reptile, he knows his special friend, I have never been sure; but he is well aware of what is happening when any benefactor begins to dig by the side of his little pond, crawling out and watching the operation with greedy eyes till a worm is turned up and given to him, when he seizes it, and waddles off at a desperate pace, usually in the wrong direction, the victim meanwhile twisting itself round his head, getting under his feet, and otherwise generally making itself unpleasant. Presently, however, he finds his watery dining-room, or is dropped into it by a kindly hand, and, once at the bottom, proceeds to tear up his prey with the aid of his claws, sharp and strong as any bird's, bolting large pieces with the slow greediness which seems generally to distinguish reptilian repasts. After thus disposing of two or three lob-worms nearly as long as himself, he is not anxious for another repast for a

day or two. His horny jaws can bite a big worm asunder at one snap, nor do small frogs fare much better; but toads he will have nothing to do with. Raw meat he especially delights in, when nicely cut up for him, and will "put away" quite a respectable quantity, and then fast for some days. By way of a change of diet, some sticklebacks were submitted to his examination; but his piscatorial tastes need developing, for he took very little notice of them. This indifference they did not reciprocate, for they evidently regarded him as a useful shelter, rushing to hide under his ample form, and, I have no doubt, sometimes tickling him dreadfully.

From finding a tiny fish-bone, however, in the water, I am inclined to think that the unsuspecting fishlings may have found in him a treacherous refuge. What damage he would do to the human finger I don't know; unlike Dr. Watts's dogs, he does not delight to bite, and his scratching when taken up is only an effort to escape. For, phlegmatic as he seems, he does not readily brook restraint; place him on a table, and after a time he will display a suicidal-looking tendency to crawl off; and in a small enclosure he will climb impossible-looking places, his great muscular power enabling him to drag his unwieldy carcase up anything that affords him a secure hold for his claws.

With autumn, his activity, such as it is, and appetite alike begin to wane, and he spends the winter, after the manner of his kind, in torpidity and abstinence, in which latter, even in their period of active life, tortoises can far surpass any "fasting man." In fact, their comparative indestructibility is much in favour of these animals as pets; besides their power of undergoing abstinence, their shell protects them from rough treatment, though the small flattish covering of a terrapin will not bear so much hard usage as the vault-like shell of a land-tortoise. Still, by curling his tail round sideways, "Douglas" can manage to accommodate his members inside sufficiently well to defy the impertinent curiosity of thoughtless kittens, which are not inclined to respect any creature, however venerable in appearance. And nothing in nature, surely, looks more antique than these slow, shielded reptiles, whose gnarled and weather-beaten appearance is justified by the great age they are known to attain. Not that "Douglas" can be termed a patriarch; though several years must have elapsed since he crawled, no bigger than a half-crown piece, from the white egg laid by his parent on the shore of some water in the "sunny south." And that many more may pass before he bequeaths to them his shell as the memento of his unobtrusive existence is, I am sure, the wish of all his friends.

OUR LITTLE SCHEME.



ISN'T there somebody who says something, somewhere, about women being "uncertain." Perhaps it's Scott, or Voltaire, or possibly the Archbishop of Canterbury—I'm not sure, and I don't much care. I only mentioned it because I'm going to tell you something about an "uncertain" girl. Gwen Clifford was a very lovely creature; tall and slim and fair, with fine dark eyes and eyebrows, and a most enchanting smile. She lived with her aunt, and they came to stay in Burchester about the same time that our regiment, the "Nur-do-doos," was stationed there. The Nur-do-doos is a strictly "good form" regiment, generally wealthy, and very perfect in their morals, their single weakness being flirtation.

I don't know why we settled that old Mrs. Clifford and her niece had come to Burchester with the intention of catching one of us, but we did. Possibly, because the old lady had a Roman nose. I'm not sure. Personally, I've not much faith in a nose of that shape. I don't believe the Great Duke's nose had the slightest influence at Waterloo. I've known too many simpering fools with Roman noses, to believe that it had. Still, the general belief was as I've said. And, shortly, circumstances seemed to warrant us in our belief, for very soon there was a most promising flirtation in full swing between the fair Gwen and our youngest subaltern. His name was Philip Dyke. We were rather puzzled to think why he was picked out. He certainly wasn't the wealthiest of us. We were far too clever to think that it was because he was a nice boy and fairly good-looking. We were sorry for him. Two of us even went so far as to warn him—at least, we began to. It was one evening after dinner; we three were alone in the mess; but at the first word he rose, saying with much dignity, "When I tell you that I intend asking Miss Clifford to become my wife, you will perhaps see that your remarks are impertinent." Of course, there was no more to be said. Still, we grieved for him. Next morning he had gone on leave, before any of us had seen him. We didn't know what to make of it! Had he asked and been refused? We heard that he had been closeted with the colonel for some time before his departure; but when the wiliest of us tried to pump that astute officer, the result was *nil.* There was nothing to be got out of him. By accident we discovered that Dyke had not taken leave of the Cliffords at all! Then we held council together. We decided unanimously that as Jack Roscoe had more charms in the way of "filthy lucre" than any other one of us, it was plainly his duty to come to the rescue. Jack didn't see it. Not at first. But he was a good fellow, and when we pointed out that it was

plainly our duty not to permit one of our number "to be caught," he saw it at once, and consented—Gwen was pretty too, and perhaps that had something to do with it.

"You'll have to be careful, Jack," said the Nestor of our mess. "Don't get caught yourself."

Roscoe didn't do much that day. Like a wise tactician, he considered how he should commence the attack. After mess that evening he retired to his room—to write letters, he said. There was a letter from his *mater* which had cried out for an answer for a month or more. Then he thought he would send

'THERE WAS A CONFUSED TORRENT OF WORDS FROM ROSCOE" (*p.* 170).

"If she catches me, dear boy," drawled Jack, "she'll be so precious clever that I'd as soon marry her as not. Bound to marry someone some time, you know. Clifford isn't a bad name; and if I feel I'm getting shaky, I'll ask one of you fellows to look up their pedigree."

"All right, we will," one and all responded heartily; for we felt that he was about to do a noble action, and were proud of him accordingly.

In the course of the day it leaked out that Dyke had gone on a whole month's leave. So much the better; we should have the more time to work our fell purpose.

his tailor a cheque, and encourage him by ordering a new suit of clothes. One never knew what might happen, and it was as well to be at peace with the world.

This sounded serious. Did he really contemplate deserting the noble army of bachelors? We could better have spared Dyke than him. But when we ventured to express our fears, he gave a shout of derision.

Still, he didn't seem in any hurry to begin. At the end of the week we began to feel anxious. At last we ventured to remonstrate. We murmured in his hearing that "Life was short," and that at the rate at

which he was progressing Dyke would be back before he had even fired a preliminary shot.

"I have not been idle," said he gravely. "I've been putting on my best manner. It's not often I have occasion to wear it. When I have, I like to put it on a day or two before I use it, in order that it may permeate me, and thoroughly settle into all the crevices of my being."

We stared at him. But the next day was Sunday, and after Church Parade we comprehended his meaning.

He attached himself to Miss Clifford's "mob." She was an attractive girl, and we all fluttered about her. Not too close, mind, for fear of singeing our wings. Roscoe did not approach the shrine on this occasion. He simply addressed himself to the attendant priestess —that is to say, the Roman-nosed aunt. Then we understood his allusion to his best manner. There was in his bearing to the old lady a subtle mixture of profound respect, of calm admiration, of "Oh, had we only met twenty years ago," that was very fetching. At least, we thought so, and so, it appeared, did she; for when they parted she gave him permission to call on her.

This was a distinct step; for it must be admitted that, with all their base designs, the Cliffords were not at all pressing in their invitations to Lawn Cottage—the name of their abode. But that, we felt, was merely because they were too clever, or too poor.

By the end of the week Roscoe, having stormed the outposts, ventured to approach the citadel itself. Here he did not get on so well. Miss Clifford seemed to look at him with an air of amused surprise. There was a sad expression in her eyes, too; as if she were thinking of "sad sea waves," or "light of other days," or even—dread thought—of Dyke! The very idea struck us "all of a heap." Pathetically we implored Roscoe to hurry up, or matters wouldn't be in full swing when Dyke returned. Roscoe's manner was not pleasant; he told us to go to—a very remote place in Africa. The weather was sultry, and we resented it. In winter we might not have felt it so deeply.

However, he complied with our request, and Dyke on his return found a very pretty flirtation in full swing between those two. He didn't seem to pay much attention to them, or to anyone else. He seemed devoured with anxiety to explore the neighbourhood. Whenever he was off duty, he was walking. In our playful way we asked him if the War Office had commissioned him to prepare a map of the country. He only shook his head. Evidently badly hit, we thought. We groaned for him. But soon we felt we might have to groan for ourselves. Roscoe's manner was not satisfactory. It almost seemed as if he were in earnest! So much so that we began to wonder whether it wouldn't be wise to begin to hunt up Miss Clifford's pedigree.

It was glorious weather, that June, and on the last day of it there was a big garden party on at the Manor. The Nur-do-doos were invited to a man, and as many as could accepted. The gathering was very select, and we were a little annoyed to see Roscoe in close attendance on the fair Gwen. From that moment we gave him up! And we were right, for later on, as I and a brother "sub" were strolling in the grounds, a shower obliged us to take shelter in an old boat-house. We stood by the door and looked out. Over the rustic bridge thrown across the lake came hurrying Roscoe and Gwen Clifford.

They, too, were seeking shelter, and were coming straight towards us! In a moment they would see us; so, as we did not wish to frighten them away, we moved silently to the extreme end of the boat-house, and stood in the darkness, with our backs against the wall.

"How clever of you to find out this old place, Mr. Roscoe!" exclaimed Gwen breathlessly, as she ran in.

He made no answer to this. He only said, "You must stand farther back, or you will get very wet; the rain beats in."

She stood back a little, still looking out on the rain. He also stood back, but he gazed on her. They were silent. *We* felt uncomfortable. If either of us had expected a legacy of untold amount—which we didn't —we would cheerfully have made anyone a present of our expectations for the privilege of leaving that boat-house then and there, unheard. We felt sure of what was coming, and we were not wrong, for suddenly there was a confused torrent of words from Roscoe, and he had done it.

Miss Clifford did not answer him for a moment. She seemed to be looking at him curiously. Then, as if satisfied that he was in earnest, she said, quietly—

"I am sorry, but I cannot marry you. I do not care for you in the very least—in that way."

Then (we should have blushed for him, but were already too far gone in that direction on our own account) we heard him tell her that he was rich, that he could give her everything her heart could desire, that he would sell out——

"Would you have me marry you for your wealth?" interrupted the girl.

"Anything! Anything!" he cried eagerly. "Only marry me! I have enough for both."

Very far gone, indeed, was Roscoe!

"So you think I am very poor?"

"But what is that to me?" he cried wildly, approaching nearer to her.

"Please keep away! You are mistaken about me —altogether mistaken!"

Roscoe started.

"I came down here as auntie's guest. She wanted to come to Burchester, and asked me to come with her. We said nothing about my having money. It was no one's business but our own. Your colonel is an old friend of aunt's; he knew."

Roscoe had by this time recovered himself. His next words proved that he intended to have it out with the fair Gwen. The rain continued to pour. He would have time.

"If it is not impertinent, might I ask why you have led me on?"

"If it is not inquisitive, may I ask your motive—in

the first place—for honouring me with your attentions ?" she retorted.

"I think I have proved my motive," said he haughtily.

"Your motive in the beginning was simply to humiliate me—I saw it all. Sir," she cried vehemently, "you regarded me and my aunt as a couple of scheming women, and——"

"Did Dyke regard you in that light?"

I am sure he hadn't the faintest idea of what would be the result of his inquiry, for poor Gwen burst into tears, and prepared to leave the place.

"Don't do that," he cried. "Forgive me; I will go;" and out in the pouring rain he went.

It was all very well for him, but it didn't help *us*. There were we, shut up for an indefinite time—it rained with a steady persistence worthy of the days of the Deluge—with a crying girl. Great goodness! how she did cry! Before that experience I had always believed that women's crying was all outside show, just put on to gain some point. That girl undeceived me. Compared to any exhibition of the kind I had ever witnessed before, it was as Niagara to Lodore! And there were we, squeezed flat against the wall, not daring so much as to wink an eyelid. And that wasn't the end of it, for just as we were beginning to flatter ourselves that the flow of water—both within and without—was abating, we heard footsteps on the gravel, and Dyke, umbrella in hand, darkened the doorway! We knew what was going to happen, and it happened. It came to pass in this wise:—

"I met Roscoe just now, hurrying for wraps for you; so I asked him where you were and have brought you my umbrella."

"That is very nice of you; but as the rain is ceasing, I'll not deprive you of it," answered Gwen sweetly, with not a trace of tears in her voice.

"Do you wish me to take myself off, Miss Clifford?" said he shortly.

"I wish you to do exactly as you please," she replied.

"Then I shall stay—at any rate, until I have explained my seeming rudeness in going away so suddenly."

"Wouldn't it be as well for me to take your apologies as made—especially as it is getting fine?"

"No," decidedly. "On the night before I took my leave, just as I was coming to your house, the Colonel sent for me, and after a deal of palaver said you and your aunt were great friends of his, that of course your friends expected you to marry well, as you were an heiress, and all that."

"Fussy old man!" exclaimed Gwen.

"One way and the other he managed to put me up. I did not choose to be considered a fortune-hunter, so I promptly asked for a month's leave, and went off without saying a word to anyone."

"Very sensible of you," said Gwen, quiet sarcasm in her tone.

"So I thought at the time, but as my leave ran on I began to doubt, and I came back resolved to—to——" Here he broke down.

We pitied him; but it was interesting. Gwen didn't help him. So he picked himself up again and went on—

"But when I found Roscoe——"

"I hate Mr. Roscoe."

"Gwen! Gwen! Answer me this—do you hate *me?*"

She turned her face to his.

After that we had a very bad time, but at length they departed.

At mess that night we were asked what we had done with ourselves at the party. We had been missed, and it was requested that we should give an account of ourselves. We stated that we had spent the major part of our time looking at "Tableaux Vivants."

ŒTHEL.

AT A PARSEE WEDDING.

"THE marriage season is almost over—but if I hear that a wedding will take place before you leave Bombay you may be sure that I will secure you an invitation to it," said Mr. Dosabhoy Franiji, a well-known Parsee.

"Many thanks," I replied, "but you say the marriage season is over; do you mean that weddings only take place during a certain part of the year."

"I do indeed," answered Mr. Franiji, "for when the Parsees first landed in India they were allowed by Jadi Ran, the Hindu chief of the Sanyan, to settle in his territory only on condition, so tradition relates, of their laying down their arms, changing their style of dress, performing their marriages in conformity with the practice of the Hindus, and abstaining from killing the cow. Now the Hindus only marry their children during January and February, as these months are supposed to be specially propitious; and though Parsees may marry a little later in the year than that, still the greater number of marriages are arranged to take place during those months. I dare say I shall soon hear of a marriage amongst my young friends, and you may be sure I shall have much pleasure in taking you to it."

I regretted I had not been in Bombay during the matrimonial months, as it is only in that city that Parsee marriages can be seen to perfection.

However, all was well, for a few days later I received an invitation to a wedding in the All Bless Bagh or Garden. The hour fixed was six p.m., and shortly

before that time Mr. Franiji and his son called for me and drove me to the marriage hall.

Not knowing whether I should recognise any of the ladies, I said to Mr. Franiji's son, whom I had not met before :

"Will any of your sisters be at the wedding, Mr. Franiji?"

"I am Mr. Franiji," promptly replied his father, "my son's name is Dosabhoy."

"He has your first name then," I said, "but his surname must be Franiji."

"Oh no," laughingly replied Mr. Dosabhoy Franiji, "amongst Parsees we do not use a surname as you do in England, but the sons take the father's first name. My name you know is Dosabhoy Franiji, my son's name is Jehangir Dosabhoy, and his little boy has Jehangir for his second name."

"How very confusing; how can you tell 'who is who,' if every generation has a different surname?"

"That is easy; we all say in describing a man that he is the son of so-and-so, and there is never any confusion. Here we are nearing the All Bless Bagh, and I want to take you to my daughter, Mrs. Cowasji, who will explain everything to you."

The sounds of the "Europe" music, as a brass band in Bombay is called, seemed close at hand, but the crowd of carriages obliged us to take our position in the queue and wait our turn. Many Parsee gentlemen, radiant in their spotless white marriage garments, passed along, while the illumination from the gates at the entrance to the garden shed a fitful glare on the quaint groups of natives who had gathered round to see the *tamaska* or festivity.

The gates were gaily illuminated with "buttis," that is, lighted wicks floating in saucers of oil, fifty or sixty suspended on triangular stands, of which dozens were placed about the entrance and in the gardens.

Mr. Franiji took me to the hall set apart for ladies, and there introduced me to his daughter. Already there was a fair sprinkling of the bride's friends awaiting her, all in full dress. Many ladies wore *saris*, *i.e.*, the loose garment which they drape round them so gracefully and cunningly that it serves both as skirt and covering for the head and shoulders. It is made of the palest shade of purple, heliotrope, blue or green, while many ladies wear white soft silk saris with beautifully embroidered borders.

"How long do the ceremonies last? have you been here very long?" I asked of Mrs. Cowasji.

"I have been at the bride's house for some hours, and we shall not return home till midnight," she said, in rather a weary voice.

"Are you not very tired before it is all over," I said, rather dreading that I too might have to stay till midnight.

"Yes, very; but it is the custom for those of us who are related to the bride or bridegroom to wait till quite the last."

Now and then a little Parsee boy dressed in white or pale green satin trousers and having a satin coat of a darker shade would run into the hall to ask something of his mother, but on the whole the silence was almost oppressive as we sat watching the new arrivals, who were all ladies. Hardly anyone spoke except to greet a friend on her entrance, and it seemed to me *triste*, and very unlike a gathering of my own sex at home.

There must have been seven or eight hundred guests assembled before the bridal parties made their appearance. In the centre of the hall was a small open space round which chairs had been placed. Several venerable looking Dasturs or priests, dressed in white, stood in readiness to take part in the ceremony, and on tables close beside them were trays of dry rice and cocoanuts, emblematic of plenty. Several brass trays holding rice, cocoanuts, and pân soparis or spice packets, were brought in on the shoulders of servants. Suddenly, to the sounds of the "Europe" band, the bride's party and the bridegroom's entered from opposite sides of the hall simultaneously. Then there was such a crushing and pressing to the barred windows of the marriage hall to catch a glimpse of the two parties!

Each party was so surrounded by friends that it was hardly possible to see much of the two most important persons. Both parties approached the space in the middle of the hall across which a white sheet was held, the bride and bridegroom taking their seats on opposite sides so that they could not see each other.

Crowds of friends trooped in, till the hall was completely full. Thirteen or fourteen hundred guests were expected, and by this time all had probably arrived.

The priests began to chant the marriage service in the ancient Zend language, which is not "understanded of the people." The bride and bridegroom were each furnished with a handful of rice, and it is a matter of great excitement to see which first throws this rice at the other, when the sheet which has been held up between them is suddenly withdrawn. That one whose rice first touches the other is supposed to possess the warmer affection for the other.

After the sheet was withdrawn the now married couple sat side by side, while the Dasturs, sometimes together and sometimes separately, addressed a long oration to them, still in Zend, on their duties to each other and the world at large. All the time that the oration was going on the priests held rice in their hands and threw several grains at a time over the young couple, apparently enforcing each command with a shower of rice. While the exhortation was going on the guests got up and walked about and talked, and no further heed was paid to the priests or what they said.

Garlands made of jessamine buds interspersed with roses were then hung round the necks of the bride and bridegroom, till each looked as if they were wearing boas of flowers. Then little dabs of vermilion were placed on the foreheads of the happy pair and their near relations, as an outward and visible sign of joy and gladness at the union.

The feast was the next feature of the entertainment

in which everyone took the keenest interest. Long tables with forms on each side were placed in a building opening on to the garden. Fresh banana leaves were put at intervals on the table before the guests, each leaf measuring about two feet by one. They looked fresh and nice and made capital plates. One banana leaf serves for all the courses, which are brought round by attendants. Curries of all sorts, rice chutnees, fresh and dried fruits, sweets and cakes, were placed by the servers on each guest's leaf, till the pretty green plate was dotted over with all sorts of good things, which were apparently enjoyed indiscriminately by the guest. Thus, a mouthful of curry was followed by sweets and cakes, by chutnees, all eaten in the daintiest way with the fingers, spoons and forks not appearing at all. At the end of the meal attendants brought round a bowl and brass jar, and poured water over the fingers of each guest.

Mr. Franiji took me round the brilliantly illuminated gardens, where some of the guests were enjoying the music of the band. It was impossible to seat all the guests at once, owing to their numbers. The custom is for the host and his intimate friends and near relations to dine with the last company. The festivities would not finish till about midnight, when the bride and bridegroom would go to their house accompanied by a remnant of their guests.

Is it from the Parsees we have borrowed the custom of throwing rice at a wedding? With them it means, "May prosperity and plenty always be with you." Is there any such meaning in the comparatively modern custom that has sprung up amongst us?

May Thorne.

A COLONIAL SUMMER TRIP.

"He and his wife had pitched their canvas home" (*p.* 175).

We were a party of six; our rendezvous was at a neighbouring homestead, and a merry set we were the night before our start, discussing plans and making our final preparations for a month's trip across the middle island. The following morning dawned as only in New Zealand the lovely prelude of a beautiful day can dawn; and with light hearts we made an early move, after carefully packing our "swag." This, consisting principally of saddles, bridles, and guns, was stowed away in our two carriages, a dogcart and tandem, and a buggy and pair.

Our first bit of road was nothing but a rough track over some fifteen miles of hilly country, and our party were well occupied in holding on while the wheels made frantic plunges into heavy ruts or jumped concealed boulders. After rounding some pretty lagoons, we presently joined the coaching road, and found ourselves left with a promising crop of bruises and sore bones. With a sigh of relief, the ladies arranged their hair and hats, and settled themselves comfortably to enjoy the remaining three hours' drive to the hospitable station at which we were to lunch. Such a cosy, snug little homestead it was at the foot of a high mountain, planted around with trees, as protection from prevailing winds; dogs chained up here and there, and a breed of pure white poultry strutting in the sunshine.

Our bachelor hosts being university men, devoted their spare time, among other refinements, to forming

and classifying a collection of flora and minerals; and we spent a very pleasant hour in overhauling these and other curiosities, with which their pretty rooms abounded. At the luncheon table an extra chair was set for a magnificent tom cat, introduced with great dignity under the title of "Beelzebub."

In what manner he had earned this name we did not learn, but are bound to admit that in company his Majesty behaved with unusual propriety and decorum.

Proceeding on our way through a peculiar country of somewhat ugly terraced formation, we had occasion to cross a small river, itself inoffensive enough, but banked in rather steeply—too steeply, at all events, to suit our unfortunate dog-cart wheeler, who chose the middle of this stream as a likely place for jibbing obstinately, and it was only when a collapse seemed imminent, that, with the timely help of a road-mender, we persuaded our horse to return to duty. Meanwhile our friend in need, who was thoroughly soaked, sturdily refused the proffered tip, saying he had "only done as he would be done by." So we went on our way, feeling we had met with true colonial courtesy and independence.

Bachelor establishments seem to be very comfortable quarters out here, as was proved during a few days spent at another station on our route. This place was quite dainty in its colouring, the bedrooms being all tinted in pale pinks and blue, while coal fires burnt in each grate to cheer the feminine heart; for among the mountains the air gets decidedly cold, even in summer, as the sun sinks behind snowy peaks. The coal, by the way, was obtained by our host from a small mine upon his own run.

From this homestead we made a picnic expedition to a waterfall, reported as very lovely. Following a path along the river—the ladies were dismayed to find the track occasionally crossed and recrossed the stream; leaving them the alternative of wading or being carried over by the gentlemen. As the current ran fairly deep and strong, we all preferred the latter evil, which was achieved 'mid laughter and stumbles; but even then the feet and skirts got wet—an indiscretion which would probably have cost us sundry colds and influenzas in the Old Country. Here, however, in this dry, clear air, it produced nothing more serious than a laugh at the immediate inconvenience.

We continued our journey, after a day or two, by driving over a mountain pass on such a road as most of us had never been before, and through a country so justly renowned for its grand beauty that, compared with it, Swiss Alpine scenery dwindles into insignificance.

The carriage-road, following the Wai-Makarere river-bed, wound up a mountain side, and, as we slowly climbed this and gained the highest point, we here and there rested our panting teams, and took our fill of the glorious panorama stretching beneath. A foaming torrent in its broad rocky bed, gleaming coldly blue against the velvety olive green of the bush; and this, in turn, giving way above to bare peaks, crowned in the glistening southern afternoon, with snow and glaciers. Our road, cut through solid rock which walled it in and sometimes literally overhung it on the one side, fell on the other with an unprotected edge a sheer drop of many hundred feet into the valley below.

As we had increased our number by the addition of another man, and hints having spread of the road being in bad condition through recent floods, two of the gentlemen rode, leading spare horses to be ready for accidents. Happily these were not needed, and that evening we safely reached the Bealy Accommodation House. In these "Hotels," as they prefer to call them, there is but one public room, where all classes sit down together to the *table-d'hôte* tea, the driver of the mail-coach generally taking the head of the table and carving for all. The bedrooms, each with two beds and a wash-hand stand, are mere cubicles run up with matchboard partitions allowing every word to be plainly heard on either hand. Unwilling eavesdropping to our neighbours' conversation made us wary, and among our party silence was a strict rule observed in these rooms: scarcely a whispered "Good-night" being sent from one bed to another, and as for confidences and secrets those were reserved for the mountain summits.

The rumours of damage to the roads by storms were confirmed here, and being advised by the knowing ones to discard our light buggy and dogcart, we ladies left the Bealy on the mail-coach—a remarkable construction, eminently suited to its work and drawn by a team of five horses. The gentlemen rode, each leading a spare horse, and formed our mounted escort. As the dawn was only appearing when we started, the cold was intense, and, though well wrapped in furs, the first sunbeams found us with blue faces and numb fingers. Just here the route involved some rough travelling, for, descending sharply, we crossed the river, and for some distance ran over its shingly bed, where the track, formed by the simple expedient of rolling aside the larger rocks and stones, is, needless to say, constantly effaced by the first freshet. This had occurred a few days before we passed, and the "going" was equally trying to the temper of springs, spokes, and passengers. Our genial driver—who, by the way, grew prolific in thrilling anecdotes when he spied a nervous passenger—here improved the occasion by a graphic account of a recent capsize in mid-stream, when a lady, being washed upon a handy rock, calmly took advantage of her point of view to produce a sketch from life of the catastrophe for an English paper. Though admiring her pluck, we secretly determined that, should the opportunity offer, our moral condition would unfit us to earn a similar tribute of praise from our Jehu.

After skirting the foot of the bush for a few miles we struck a fresh gorge, and turned into its deep and narrow defile, where the cool, early morning mists still lay to soften splashing cascades and sharply cut rocks, or help birch and pine, fuchsia and lancewood, to blend with a hundred gracefully falling creepers into a fairy-land of beauty. Higher up it melted where snow and ice shone rosy and golden in the sun's rays.

In this part the road had been destroyed, and several

times the coach occupants had to get down and scramble along the edge of the bush while the coach itself took to the river, and made its dangerous way up stream, which proceeding was watched with anxious eyes; for had it turned over—though our party could rely on their saddle horses—the other passengers would have been left stranded in the centre of the bush. Later on we passed some really awful places, having been mounting for some hours, and at one part the coach tilted over a large stone, so that those having the outside seats hung for a second over a yawning precipice. It took some little time to recover one's equanimity, which was not aided by our coachman's little weakness again moving him to ask coolly if we had seen some white bones at the bottom. These, he explained, were remains of a waggon team which had fallen bodily over.

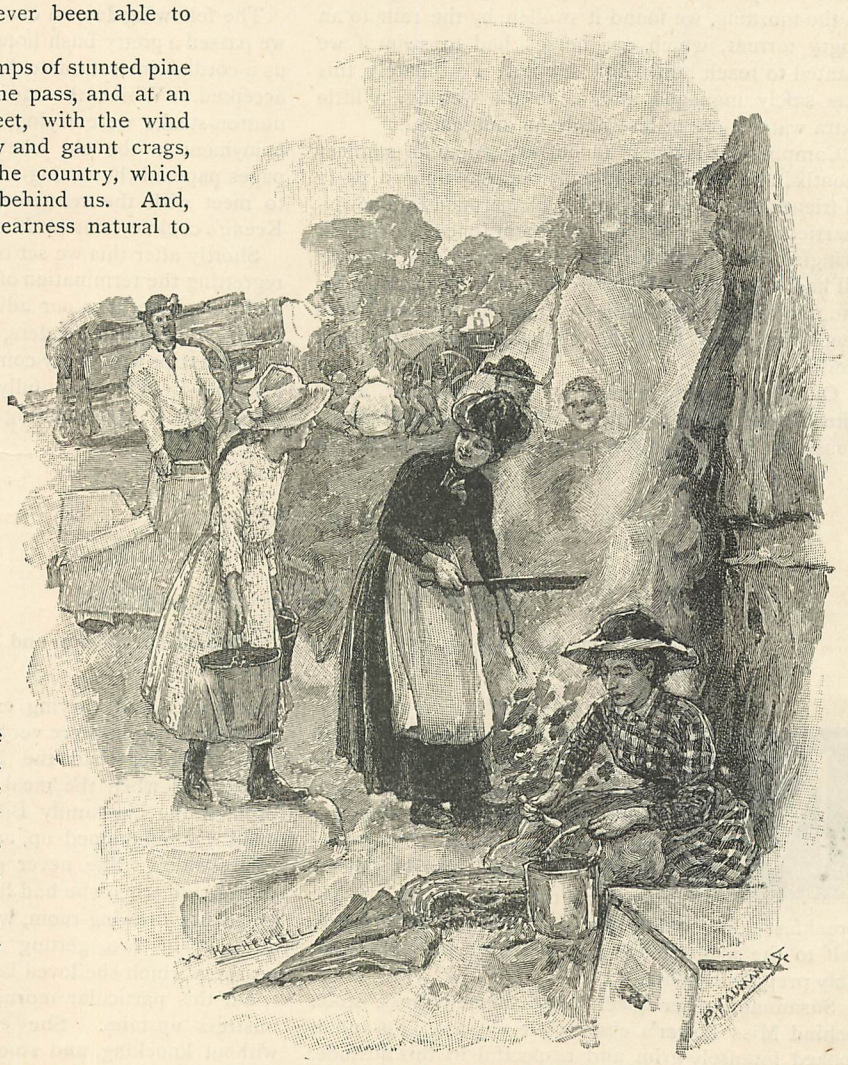
It was on our return down this nightmare road that one of the gentlemen's horses bolted, together with the one in leading; and how he steered the runaway pair safely round the sharp corners and avoided the precipices, he has never been able to recall.

Rising above the last clumps of stunted pine we gained the summit of the pass, and at an elevation of some 1,000 feet, with the wind blowing keenly across snow and gaunt crags, we turned to look over the country, which lay sharply mapped out behind us. And, though the extraordinary clearness natural to this atmosphere rather dwarfed the effect of distance, the prospect of shining peaks and rolling bush was unsurpassably grand.

Once over the crest, with a quick spin down the other side, and our day's travel ended by seventeen miles of fine level road, winding its way through that mystery—the Natural Bush.

Macdonald's Accommodation House stands in its very midst; miles and miles of gigantic fern-palms and mighty tree monarchs, overgrown with parasitic creepers and fragile ferns, stretch away on every side. And this, our goal, a place of many excursions, was kept by a Scotchman, and, if bare of luxuries, was comfortable and exquisitely clean. Many a merry evening did our worthy host and his son entertain us with bagpipe and fling, not to mention the adventures of his gold-digging days, when, as a young man, he and his wife had pitched their canvas home and made their pile. Gold had been found in the mountains behind his present hotel, and, being personally interested in the diggings, he took us up to persuade us to invest in a few shares.

"Spot" was an old spaniel, born and bred at Macdonald's, and possessed of all, if not more than, a bushman's instincts. The sight of a gun always roused in him the usual sporting dog's excitement; but shown in his own peculiar way. His method was to disappear among the trees, when, after a few moments, a persistent barking would lead the sportsman to some tall, black pine, at the foot of which "Spot" gave tongue. This was a sure sign that game of some kind, whether pigeon or ka-ka, was perched amongst its branches. The dog was never known to make a mistake, which is the more remarkable because the majority of these bush trees are so lofty that birds in the topmost boughs are frequently nearly out of gun-



"THE COOKING ITSELF IS NO LIGHT TASK" (*p.* 176).

shot, though within the range of the clever animal's perception.

Sport of this sort was plentiful, and wild pigs were fairly numerous; but they are dangerous customers to meet at some seasons, or if molested. One day, when returning from a scramble, we ladies encountered a whole pig family, and, rushing back with the news, were finely laughed at when "mine host" suggested that our quarry were only his tame ones, accustomed to wander, and probably wending their way home to supper.

The wild-duck-shooting was a failure according to feminine notions; for we could only spare one day, and that was threatening a downpour when we started on our ten mile ride to the lake. Before arriving the rain began; and, though the sportsmen braved the weather in boats, we preferred to take such shelter as could be got in a rough cowshed, where we passed the time as best we might; devoured damp sandwiches among the cattle; and were glad enough to mount for the return journey. On coming to a river, easily forded in the morning, we found it swollen by the rain to an angry torrent, which our horses had to swim if we wanted to reach home and supper. Fortunately this was safely managed, and, as to the wetting, a little extra water more or less made no difference.

Camping-out is a very favourite pastime for summer months, and we came suddenly one day upon a party of friends, mostly young people, chaperoned by a newly-married couple. We joined them once at dinner, bringing our share with us, and a very jolly time we all had together. Generally one servant is taken for the rough work; the ladies do all the rest, and when there are many men the cooking itself is no light work.

Our last excursion was to Lake Brunner, about fifteen miles away, and, there being an accommodation house, we decided to sleep the night, and make two days of it. We arrived at dinner-time to find the house shut up, and the host and hostess absent. So, letting our horses run in a little paddock attached to the place, we awaited events with as much patience as our appetites would allow.

The lake itself was lovely, and our artist prepared to sketch, but was ignominiously routed by overwhelming sandflies, which swarmed in thick clouds round his head. Pipes and cigarettes were unavailing, and an experiment with kerosene, by using as a puggary his handkerchief soaked in the oil, proved so offensive that we at last retired, leaving the unhappy painter to fight the tiny pests alone.

While our dinner cooked we watched a little sailing boat come gaily across the lake in the blood-red rays of the setting sun. As it touched land out sprang two stalwart young bushmen and made their hurried way to the house. In a few moments they returned, and we learnt afterwards that they were bridegroom and best man come to borrow spoons and such like for wedding festivities.

The following day, on our ride back to Macdonald's, we passed a pretty bush homestead, whose owner gave us a cordial invitation to lunch, which we gratefully accepted. Whilst the national and always savoury mutton-steaks were frying, we found an unexpected enjoyment in the old jokes of "Mr. Punch," whose pages papered the sitting-room walls. It was strange to meet with the refinements of a Du Maurier and Keene's cockneyisms in this remote bush cottage.

Shortly after this we set out on our return journey, regretting the termination of a most enjoyable holiday; and though perhaps our adventures may seem a trifle rough to English readers, accustomed to take their summer trips with every comfort, they can be sure that any loss of luxury is fully repaid to their colonial cousins by a corresponding gain in robust health.

LILY CARLON DAVIES.

OUT OF THE FASHION.

By L. T. MEADE, Author of "Engaged to be Married," "Scamp and I," etc. etc.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

MISS POWER was old and rich, and had apparently nothing whatever to do. Nevertheless she kept early hours, and never wasted a moment of her time. Punctually as the clock struck eight she sat down at the head of her modest breakfast-table, and drank the coffee, and helped herself to the nice fried bacon which Susannah invariably prepared for her.

Susannah, in her queer, old-fashioned dress, stood behind Miss Power's chair while she ate. Susannah looked intensely grim and respectful in this attitude, never indulging in speech, but showing by the queer contortions and varying expressions of her features that her thoughts were very busy.

Miss Power read the *Times* as she sipped her coffee, and when the meal was over the old servant brought the big family Bible, and Jane the kitchen-maid was summoned up, and Miss Power read a few verses aloud. She never prayed, she only read the verses, and when she had finished she invariably went up to her drawing-room, where she busied herself for an hour or two, getting it into the prim state of neatness which she loved best.

On this particular morning Susannah followed her mistress upstairs. She entered the drawing-room without knocking, and stood silent and respectful just within the door. Miss Power was watering a stand of

beautiful ferns; she turned round and said abruptly—"I am coming to the kitchen by and by, Susannah; if you have any complaint to make of Jane you can make it then."

"Eh, ma'am, not I," answered Susannah. She closed her lips with a snap, as if she were locking them, but still she lingered in the room.

Miss Power stood still for a moment; a slight passing expression of annoyance swept over her fine face. It did not linger there; she went up to the old servant, and spoke quietly:

"You have something on your mind, Susannah. Say it in as few words as possible, for I am expecting friends to call this morning, and am consequently very busy."

"*I* know," retorted Susannah, "*I* know who are coming."

"Very well; if you have anything to say about my visitors, say it and then go."

"Eh, ma'am, it's only this," said Susannah; she raised her sunken eyes, which were suddenly lighted with an inward fire. "It's only a word, ma'am, and it won't be hearkened to. Still, I must say it. Money's hard to win, and easy to lose, and sore to do without, and who *are* those Rosses, I want to know. That's what I say to myself. Who, and what are those Rosses?"

"You can go downstairs now, Susannah," replied Miss Power.

The old servant turned and left the room without another word.

"Susannah does not approve," murmured Miss Power to herself.

She did not say anything more, but, opening the windows which led into the balcony stepped out, and looked up the Gardens in the direction of the Rosses' house. She saw no sign of Betty and Kitty approaching, but a postman just then ran up the high steps of her house, and deposited a letter in the box. A moment later Susannah brought it in, and presented it to her mistress on a silver salver.

"MISS POWER TURNED SHARPLY TO MR. ROGERS" (*p.* 180).

Miss Power read the contents of her letter slowly, and with interest. Three sides of a sheet were closely written, and these were the contents:

"ASHTON MANOR,
"*July* 11.

"MY DEAR JESSICA,—There is not the least doubt that my foolish son Mark has gone absolutely to the length of *flirting* with a girl who lives somewhere in your Gardens. You know my views for Mark, and how much turns on them. Of course under these circumstances any wife of his own choosing would be unacceptable to me, but when in addition I discover that the object of his preference is one of the daughters of that dreadful man whose name has so lately figured in the newspapers—I allude to the Ross and Banbury business—you may guess what my feelings must be.

"It is impossible for a mother to control the doings of a son who is not only grown up but a good deal over age. But tact, my dear Jessica—tact can do wonders in these delicate cases—and I am sure if it is in your power you will help me in this matter. Whatever happens, Mark must marry into a good family, and his wife must have money. You know how insecure my present position is, and will fully sympathise with me.

"Yours affectionately,

"JANE DANBY.

"P.S.—I should be very glad to see you at Ashton Manor on Saturday, the 25th, until Monday, the 27th, if you can tear yourself away from your queer, delightful, funny old house, and queerer, and more delightful handmaiden Susannah."

"But *I* cannot tear myself away from them," murmured Miss Power. "This letter from beginning to end is balderdash. I never did care for you, Jane Danby, and I certainly do *not* feel inclined to begin to do so after reading a letter like this."

Miss Power slipped it into her pocket as she spoke, for at this moment the drawing-room door was opened, and Kitty and Betty, looking sweet and radiant in fresh cambric dresses, rushed in.

"Dear Jessica," they both exclaimed. They ran up to the old lady, and kissed her affectionately.

"Sybil said you wanted to see us," remarked Kitty. "We are awfully busy, for the house and furniture are to be sold next week. And we want to take lodgings at once, and not to go to that dreadful home for women."

"No, we'd certainly die there," interposed Betty. "In homes of that sort nobody laughs, and nobody plays, and Kitty and I couldn't stand it—could we, Kitty?"

"No," said Kitty. "Margaret is the only one of us who could live long in the sort of neutral atmosphere which must pervade a cheap home for women."

"And Margaret is the one of you all who needs the most sunshine," replied Miss Power. "Well, my dears, I have not the least idea to what home you are alluding, but if you don't like it, perhaps you won't have to go."

"That depends," answered Kitty. "Uncle David Ross came to see us yesterday, and he said he would find situations for Betty and Margaret and me as governesses, or shopwomen, or something of that sort. Until he found the situations, we were to live in the women's home. He thought we could not help ourselves, for of course he thought we had no money. Well, Jessica, he is wrong; you know the very night before father disappeared he gave Margaret one hundred pounds in ten-pound notes—when the earthquake came, and everything that seemed right turned out to be wrong, Margaret took the money back to the solicitors in Lincoln's Inn Fields, who had written to her. But Margaret thought, she said so, that our jewels were our very own, and we sold them a week ago, and even after paying poor Mrs. Moore we really have a little money left, and we thought we might go and live in lodgings together until the situations are found for us."

"So we can't stay very long with you, Jessica," continued Betty. "For we want to go and search for the lodgings to-day."

"Well, my loves, well, if you carry out your plan, you will have plenty of time to look for lodgings by and by. Now I've sent for you because I want you. I want you both absolutely to devote this morning to me."

The girls were too polite to express impatience in their voices, but not clever enough to keep it out of their faces.

"Sit down, my loves," said Miss Power, who read their thoughts easily enough, but did not seem in any way disturbed by them. "Sybil told you I wanted to see you, did she not?"

"Yes. Oh, what *do* you think, Jessica? Sybil has engaged herself to Mark Danby!"

Miss Power put her hand into her pocket, and gave Lady Jane's letter a vicious little pinch. Aloud she said in a calm, unsurprised voice:

"Was Sybil engaged when she called to see me yesterday?"

"No; she met Mark afterwards in the Gardens, and he proposed to her. She was very late in coming home, and when she returned she seemed fearfully excited, and she said she was engaged to Mark. Maggie had a long talk with her, and Maggie cried dreadfully and wanted Sybil to give Mark up, but Syb only laughed, and kept on repeating—'I am engaged, and I mean to marry him, and there is an end of the matter.'"

"Did Sybil seem happy?" inquired Miss Power.

"Well, Jessica," replied Betty, "everyone who saw them together must have noticed that Sybil adored Mark. In fact, she worshipped him. It was a case of idolatry—on her part at least."

Miss Power not only pinched Lady Jane's letter now; she absolutely tore a little piece out of it as it lay in her pocket.

"How does Sybil's engagement strike you, Jessica?" asked Kitty. "Do you not think it is just a wee bit heartless of Syb to think of such matters just now?"

"No, my love. I do not. If there ever was a girl possessed of too much heart for her own peace of mind that girl is poor little Nineteen-year-old. But, my dears, this valuable morning must not be wasted discussing anyone's engagement. Business is business, and there is much at stake. Now tell how much you both know of housekeeping."

After this startling and unexpected turn being given to the conversation, the girls found for a moment or two that their interests hung fire, and they did not guess that Miss Power was really putting them through a very searching examination.

At the end of half an hour she started to her feet with a satisfied expression on her face.

"Now, my loves," she said, "you will kindly wait here while I go upstairs and put on my bonnet."

"Do you want us to go out with you, Jessica?"

"I do; I am going to see your lawyers, Messrs. Rogers and Turner, and I want you to come and introduce me to them. I have ordered a carriage to be here sharp at ten. Kitty, my dear, you can stand in the balcony and let me know when it arrives. Betty, I have a small task to give you. Here are my

last week's accounts—they are somewhat in a muddle. Put them as straight as you can while I am getting ready to go out.

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

BETTY had really a clear head for figures, but it must be confessed that on this occasion either nervousness or an over-stimulated curiosity as to Miss Power's extraordinary behaviour made her bungle the said accounts in an unsatisfactory manner. Miss Power came back in her black velvet poke-bonnet, with the old-fashioned Spanish black veil, which she always wore, tied loosely round it, a magnificent Spanish black lace shawl on her shoulders, black lace gloves on her hands, and an old-fashioned parasol of dove-coloured silk as the finishing touch to her attire.

Miss Power's hair was as white as silver, and she looked a most picturesque old lady when she returned in her quaint dress to the drawing-room.

"Come, girls," she said to the two. She took no notice of Betty's untidy and hopeless sums, but swept the pair on before her downstairs, and into the delightful carriage which awaited them. Miss Power was very particular about her carriage, and it was a faultless turn-out which rolled past No. 80, and out through the gates of Rosemary Gardens. Kitty suddenly laughed aloud. It was the soft summer breeze flying across her young cheeks which caused this burst of merriment.

"Jessica," she said, "while I sit here I forget the earthquake. If it would not look too dreadfully *outré*, I should like to hug you this very minute for making me so happy."

"But you mustn't do it, Kitty," interrupted Betty, for if you do I shall certainly have to follow suit, and what a mess Jessica's bonnet would get into then!"

"And I want to appear respectable, my loves, when I sit in the presence of your lawyers," retorted Miss Power, "so, if you please, we will reserve our embraces."

"Just for one instant, Jessica, give me your hand to squeeze," answered Kitty, "and then I'll positively promise to sit quiet."

The pair of greys soon brought the party to Lincoln's Inn Fields. In this secluded quarter the noise of the great city sounded dim and far away. At Miss Power's request, Kitty got out of the carriage, and went to inquire if Mr. Rogers was within. He was, and, for a wonder, disengaged. In five minutes' time Miss Power and the two girls found themselves seated in his office.

"Kitty, will you have the goodness to introduce me?" said Miss Power. Kitty blushed a good deal.

"Miss Power is an old neighbour of ours, Mr. Rogers," she said. "She lives at 50, Rosemary Gardens. We have known her for a long time now."

"The children have found me odd, but respectable," retorted Miss Power. "I live with an old servant, who is even a little more odd than I am. I keep no cats, no dogs, no parrots. By this abstinence in the matter of pets I prove at once my strength of mind, and the unique nature of my character. But perhaps sir, another side of my life and circumstances may interest you more vastly. I am rich."

Mr. Rogers was a very commonplace man. He had been staring at Miss Power in a somewhat quizzical and disdainful manner until she said "I am rich." Then his tone and look both became respectful. Miss Power knew this would be the case, and she longed to have someone to nod to, to express her inward satisfaction.

"I am delighted to make your acquaintance, madam," said Mr. Rogers. "And—and—I am pleased that these poor young ladies should have the benefit of your wise counsels at—at—this critical juncture."

"It so happens," said Miss Power, "that I have brought my young friends, Kitty and Betty Ross, here to-day solely and entirely for the furtherance of my own purposes. I wanted to be introduced to you, for, being the owner of a good deal of surplus capital, I am anxious to make an investment."

Mr. Rogers' face became eager and absorbed.

"I should be delighted to give you any advice," he said. "Ah—perhaps—would you like the young ladies to go into my waiting-room? My clerk will supply them with some numbers of the *Graphic*, and last week's *Punch*. You are fond of *Punch*, eh, Miss Kitty?"

Miss Power did not give Kitty time to answer.

"I should prefer the girls to remain where they are," she said. "Now, if you please, we will proceed to business. I am given to understand that No. 80, Rosemary Gardens, is in the market?"

"Well, yes, my dear madam. You see, in an unfortunate case of this kind the creditors——"

Miss Power interrupted with a wave of her lace-gloved hand.

"Forgive me," she said. "I am not interested in the creditors. The property is for sale?"

"Undoubtedly. It will be sold by auction next week. This day week, I believe; I will ring for my clerk and inquire."

"One moment first,—the furniture is also for sale?"

"Yes. House and furniture go either together or separately—probably the latter. I propose to sell both together, if I can, at Tokenhouse Yard, but if the house alone is sold, the furniture will be put up to auction the following week."

"And all your pretty things will go to strangers, Betty," said Miss Power, turning and looking at the young girl.

Betty's eyes filled with tears. She caught Kitty's hand in her own, and looked steadily out of the dusty window.

"Auctions are naturally painful things," proceeded Mr. Rogers. "But under the present peculiarly sad circumstances——"

"Going into the circumstances will neither aid nor hinder the matter in hand," said Miss Power. "My feelings with regard to auctions are that they are sacrilegious. The sale of a house and furniture by public auction seems to me almost wicked. I have come here to-day to know if it is necessary to sell

No. 80, Rosemary Gardens, with its furniture, plate, and china, by auction?"

"By no means, my dear madam, but it seemed the speediest way to realise, and for the sake of the creditors——"

"I *beg* of you, my dear sir, not to go into these side questions. I don't care the proverbial brass farthing for the creditors, but, having no other pets, I make pets of these children, and their feelings are sacred to me. Now I have come here to-day to make a straightforward and blunt proposal. But, first, I must ask some questions. Is No. 80 a freehold?"

"It is, Miss Power."

"That is good. I dislike leaseholds. I hate being worried with yearly ground-rents. Now, what did you expect to realise for the house in Tokenhouse Yard next week?"

Mr. Rogers hummed and hawed.

"I—I—don't know," he admitted. "An enforced sale is always injurious, and then the situation, for some extraordinary reason, is not popular."

"I beg of you, sir, not to speak against Rosemary Gardens. I reside there."

"My dear madam, a thousand pardons. I have no doubt you find it as salubrious a spot as is to be found in London."

"That is neither here nor there, Mr. Rogers. The fact is I wish to purchase No. 80, Rosemary Gardens. I wish to become the owner of the house, the furniture, the plate, the china, linen—in short, the whole concern as it stands. I don't want the house and its belongings to go to the hammer. Can we make an arrangement on the spot? But first, perhaps, my dear girls, you *would* now go into the other room, and look at *Punch* for a few minutes?"

When the door closed behind Kitty and Betty, Miss Power turned sharply to Mr. Rogers.

"Listen," she said. "I don't wish to give a penny more than I can help for this house and furniture. Name a fair sum, and I will write you a cheque as soon as ever my lawyer, Mr. Percival, at the opposite side of the road, has examined your title-deeds. Don't overdo it, my dear sir, nor imagine for a moment that because I am wealthy I am also extravagant."

After this speech Miss Power and Mr. Rogers had a rather fierce, not to say angry, tussle of words, but in the end the old lady left the lawyer's office with a flushed, triumphant, but pleased expression of face.

"We will go over and see Mr. Percival now," she said to the girls. "Not a word, my loves—not a word at present. The matter looks promising, but it is not concluded. Nothing can be concluded until I have an interview with my friend John Percival."

Kitty and Betty had to sit for nearly an hour in Miss Power's landau while she interviewed her own man of business. She came out at the end of this time, and, taking a hand of each girl in her own, said:

"My loves, we will now go home. I think I have concluded my business in a satisfactory manner, and I can at least promise you that there will be no auction at No. 80, Rosemary Gardens."

During the rest of the drive the trio were silent. Whatever their feelings, their inward thoughts, their speculations, they gave them no vent in words. When they reached the Gardens and drew up at No. 80, Miss Power for the first time opened her lips.

"What time do you dine?" she asked.

"We don't dine, Jessica," answered Betty.

"We have no cook, Jessica," chimed in Kitty. "Therefore, of course, we have no dinner."

"Well, my loves, at what hour in the evening do you all—Sybil, Maggie, and all—assemble in your drawing-room?"

"Oh, Sybil is so erratic, we can never count on her."

"You must count on her to-night. Give her my love, and a request from me that she will present herself in the drawing-room of No. 80 at seven o'clock this evening. Maggie must also be there, and, of course, you two girls."

"Very well, Jessica."

"Of course, you will be alone, remember. I am coming to talk business—solemn, dry technicalities must be gone into."

"Oh, very well."

"What a demure 'very well' from your lips, Kitty! Aren't you glad there is not going to be any horrid auction—that the furniture and the house are not going to be torn asunder?"

"Yes, yes—so glad that if I speak about it I shall cry."

"Kitty, Rosemary Gardens is, after all, an out-of-the-way corner of the world; people may be eccentric here if they please. You may kiss me now, Kitty, and so may you, Betty. Good-bye, my loves, expect me to-night at seven."

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

"THIS drawing-room belongs to Jessica now," said Kitty, "and I am going to make it bright for her. She is the most wonderful woman I ever came across in my life. She is the sweetest, perhaps the dearest, but I do *not* think she has good taste in the matter of drawing-rooms. Hers is all drab and old china; the old china is splendid, and the drab is artistic, but, somehow, the general effect is dull."

"And No. 80 never, never at any time looked dull!" said Betty.

"Yes, it did once, Betty," retorted her sister; "the day Uncle David Ross sat in that chair, and screwed up his short-sighted eyes, and looked as if he thought sunshine wicked. Well, the room shall have all the light we can get into it to-night, and how do my flowers look, Bet? You must not whisper it to Maggie, but I spent five shillings on those flowers."

Kitty and Betty had told no one of their adventures that morning. Margaret and Sybil knew that Miss Power wished to see them in their own drawing-room at seven o'clock. Margaret suggested having tea for the old lady, and Sybil, who loved her very much, spent threepence out of her own slender purse to buy cream to put into the tea when it appeared. But only Kitty and Betty knew the news which Miss Power

would bring, and which would electrify the elder and the younger sister.

At seven o'clock the four girls were all waiting in the drawing-room. Kitty and Betty, who were in the secret, looked very bright and very much excited. Margaret's face was pale, and its expression downcast, but Sybil was radiantly and quietly happy. The almost feverish excitement of twenty-four hours back had subsided. Something had happened in her life which raised her for the time being high above the sorrows and joys of penury and riches. With this delicious news in her heart she could even go to Uncle David Ross and be happy.

At five minutes past seven Miss Power arrived. Susannah accompanied her across the Gardens. She had very old-fashioned ideas, and did not think it decorous for an aged gentlewoman to be abroad in the evening except in the company of her handmaiden.

Miss Power entered the drawing-room, saluted the girls, and then sat down in a comfortable chair assigned to her.

"Well, Margaret," she said, addressing the eldest Miss Ross, "have Kitty and Betty told you about the little business we transacted together this morning?"

"No," answered Margaret. "They only said that they had taken a drive with you, Jessica."

"They are good girls," said Miss Power. "I did not tell them to keep the thing a secret, but I respect them all the more for showing reticence. Well, my dear Maggie, the little secret is simply this:—Before a week has passed over our heads I expect to be the owner of this house, with its furniture, china, plate, and linen. For goodness' sake, Sybil, child, don't hold that costly tea-cup in so careless a fashion! You'll drop it, to a certainty. Remember that cup will be mine before a week is out."

Sybil did drop the cup without breaking it. She made a rush forward, and kneeling by Miss Power, looked up with her eyes full of wonder at the good lady's face.

"Jessica!" said Sybil. "Why did you do this? You know you don't want our house and our furniture! Why did you buy them? You see Maggie can't speak. She is half-stunned with your news. Tell me quickly why you have bought them, Jessica."

"Softly, softly, little Nineteen-year-old! Well, if you must hold my hand, you must. The fact is I made up my mind to purchase this house for a great many reasons. One of them is that I hate houses of this sort, nicely decorated and nicely furnished, to go to the auctioneer's hammer. They do not fetch their value, and—and—it's hateful to see the furniture that you have a regard for, poked at, and pinched, and criticised by every fat vulgar woman who chooses to come and see it. I know how I'd feel if my feather-beds were shaken up and looked into in that style. That was one reason why I thought I'd buy. I said to myself No. 80 will go cheap in any case, and if it's a freehold I'll have it. What's the matter, Margaret?"

"Nothing, Jessica. I am only so thankful, and I know you have other reasons."

"Well, child, of course I have. But don't you suppose, you four girls, that all my reasons will please you. They may, or may not. There is one thing I am quite certain about—that they will astonish you. You may be a great deal too proud to concur with them. If you are, well, no harm is done. You can go your own ways, and No. 80 is at least as well in my hands as in those of a total stranger. If you like my plan, you will all of you have at least a home. Now just stay quiet, and don't fidget, Miss Sybil. How can I speak when you are squeezing my hand in that fashion?"

Kitty and Betty who had stood a little aloof during the beginning of the conversation, now drew near with

"SO YOU ARE GOING TO MARRY MARK DANBY" (*p.* 182).

their eyes and ears very wide open. It had *not* occurred to them that Jessica's purchase of 80, Rosemary Gardens, would provide them with a home. It was good enough thinking of the dear old thing having the place ; but this, what *could* this mean ?

"Get up, Sybil, and don't lean on Jessica in that fashion," said Kitty. "Now, Jessica, we are all listening. We are *intensely* anxious and excited."

"Well, my loves, I have bought the house and all it contains for the reasons I have already stated. My further reason I now proceed to disclose. I am a wealthy woman but I am not one of those who care to fling money away. I consider 80, Rosemary Gardens, an excellent speculation, and, with proper management, I mean it to bring me in my seven or eight per cent. Margaret, my dear, you are a careful and wise girl for your years."

"I am twenty-four, Jessica," said Margaret. "It is scarcely likely that I should not have experience."

"That is it, my love ; you have experience. You have kept this house for four years."

"Yes, Jessica."

"You have managed the housekeeping ?"

"Yes."

"And the weekly books ? Oh, I know you have had difficulties, but your own accounts have been straightforward have they not ?"

"Perfectly."

"Betty, you have a taste for figures. You are a very accurate accountant."

"Oh, Jessica, you must not judge by that disordered slate which I left in your room."

"My dear, it is not in disorder now. Susannah wiped it clean before I returned from my drive. Now, loves, I won't keep you any longer in suspense. I mean to turn No. 80 into a boarding-house."

Miss Power having delivered this bomb-shell into the midst of the little party lay back in her chair, folded her hands, and sat quite silent for a minute. At the end of that time she said—

"No. 80, Rosemary Gardens, is to be a boarding-house. This is my unalterable decision. If you like, girls, I will go away now, and you can talk the matter out, and explode about it as much as you please. To-morrow morning I can return, and we can discuss the matter in all its bearings."

"Please, Jessica, stay," said Margaret. A glow of colour had come into her very pale face, and her eyes had the misty look which shows that tears are not far off.

"Child," said Miss Power. "Does this seem hard to you ? But my dear, my dear, good, honest, hard work will be the saving of you."

"I am not a bit afraid of work," said Margaret.

"Nor I, nor I," said Kitty and Betty. Sybil alone was silent.

"For a long time," said Miss Power, "I have had an ideal boarding-house in my mind. It has seemed to me, that cleanliness, and order, and refinement were not incompatible with the term. Now I want this to be an inexpensive boarding-house, and I want lady-girls, who come up to London to work, to live here. I will make the thing pay, for nothing would induce me to consider it in any sense a charity, and you, Margaret and Kitty, shall be the heads. Either you or Kitty shall personally purchase every scrap of food that comes into the house. Either you or Kitty shall receive the visitors, shall superintend the servants, shall make yourself felt in every department of the establishment. Betty shall keep the accounts down to the lowest farthing, and once a week regularly I will audit these accounts myself. And Sybil shall have the entertainment of everybody in her charge. To Sybil the girls must look for cheerful and bright evenings, and Sybil must look after the flowers, and the pretty things generally of the house. I, of course, provide all the money to keep the establishment going, and, of course, receive every penny of the profits. You four girls, if you agree to my scheme, live here rent free. You have no expense for food or lodging, and I will provide you each with a moderate salary in addition. If you dislike the idea of keeping a boarding-house I know two excellent sisters to whom I can give the posts, and we shall part none the worse friends I hope. My loves, you are *not* to say anything about what you think to-night. I am going home, for I am dead tired. I'll call in at this same hour to-morrow, and you shall let me know what you have really decided."

Sybil accompanied Miss Power downstairs. In the hall the old lady put her arm on the girl's shoulder.

"So you are going to marry Mark Danby," she said.

"I met him yesterday, and he asked me to marry him," answered Sybil.

"Well, child, it seems to me wonderful how any girl can love a man well enough to give herself up to him for life. You do, my dear, I can see that—God help you. It never was my way : I had my chances when I was young and bonny, but I could not see the force of that all-surrender business. And many a time since I have thanked my lucky star that I have remained Jessica Power."

"Wish me happiness, Jessica," said Sybil, in an eager, half-petulant voice.

"Of course I do, my dear—God bless you. There is Susannah coming up the steps. Good-night, Sybil : Susannah give me your arm."

"Of all men in the world, I wouldn't give myself absolutely to Mark Danby," murmured Miss Power. "Body and soul that child gives herself up to him. There is no saving her ; the deed is done. Well, the world will always be full of the worshipping sort of women. They are the ruin of the men, but I suppose there is no help for them. They can't be drowned like kittens when they are babies, and, as sure as they live to grow up, they worship. Their idols are all clay, and they suffer. Some are of baser stuff than others ; that's the only difference. There's nothing vicious in Mark, but he's a bad sort for a girl to cling on to. He's selfish, and weak, and he's tied to his mother's apron-strings."

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

ASHTON MANOR was really only a Manor in name. The house was large it is true, but there were no grounds to speak of. Ashton, a charming village in Surrey, was surrounded by many really beautiful gentlemen's seats. The Manor was not beautiful. It was a grey, old house, squarely and plainly built: too old to boast of any modern conveniences, not old enough to be picturesque. The house, however, was left to Lady Jane Danby by her father. She was a Marmaduke by birth, and as proud of her blue blood as a titled dame could be. She had married the Rev. Philip Danby, a clergyman of the Church of England, a man without any showy gifts. He was poor, and it is to be supposed that, as no woman ever lived who disliked poverty more than Lady Jane, she must have married him for love. He died, however in the prime of his youth; some people whispered, because Lady Jane's tongue had been too much for him. He left a son and daughter to the care of their mother, and shortly afterwards she went to live at Ashton Manor.

Philippa was the name of the girl; she took after her father, was handsome, frank, and out-spoken. She was afraid of no one under the sun, and was in consequence a universal favourite. Mark was also a favourite, although not with equal cause. He had Philippa's eyes without their frankness; all Philippa's passions were intensified in him, but self was not primary in Philippa as it was in Mark.

Lady Jane Danby was poor in that refined sort of way which in no sense means privation. The young people had their modest wants supplied. The Manor boasted of a well-kept table, and the domestic service was excellent. Philippa had even her own little pony carriage, and Mark his West End club. Mark was supposed to be reading for the bar just now. He went to town daily. He sometimes stayed there for weeks at a time with special chums of his own.

It was Lady Jane's nature to grumble, and the young people often wondered what for.

On a certain July morning the three were seated at breakfast. It was Saturday, and Mark did not mean to go to town. Philippa in a white dress was pouring out coffee, and eagerly debating her chances in a tennis tournament which was to take place in one of their rich neighbours' grounds that afternoon. Mark was fond of arguing with Philippa; he was saying taunting things now in a lazy voice, and the young lady's cheeks were flushing, and her eyes gleaming angrily.

Lady Jane was absorbed in the contents of a letter which had just arrived by the morning's post. The same post had also brought Mark a letter, and Philippa noticed that he slipped it unopened into his pocket. She was curious about letters, and meant to get at the contents of this one presently.

Now raising her flushed face she looked across the table at her mother. Lady Jane was not pleasant to behold when she was cross, and she looked undoubtedly cross now.

"What's up, mamsey?" inquired Philippa. "Isn't your news pleasant? Who's your correspondent?"

"Philippa, you know I don't wish you to call me 'mamsey.'"

"Well, mothery. Do say something nice to me, mothery. Mark is making himself so disagreeable."

Philippa's frank impertinence generally won the day for her.

"You know, Phil, I would do anything I could for you, but really I am harassed. This letter is from Jessica Power. She won't come."

"Well, let her stay away."

"My dear, that is all very fine, but you know I particularly wanted her to be with us next Saturday; the Vincents are coming, and your cousins Violet and Clarissa Marmaduke. Jessica is a host in herself on such occasions."

"A *power*, you mean," retorted Philippa.

Mark rose, stretched himself, and prepared to leave the room.

"If you are going in for anything in such awful form as bad puns, Phil, I will leave you and mother to discuss this question by yourselves," he said. "You will find me in the library when you want me."

He shut the door behind him. The moment he had done so, Lady Jane's tone became very serious.

"Philippa," she said, "I am full of anxieties."

"Oh, poor mothery!"

The girl went up to her, put her arm round her neck, and tried to stroke out the furrows on her forehead.

"With all your heedless ways, Phil, you are a good child; you would not add to my cares I am sure. Philippa, it is most necessary to keep excellent friends with Jessica."

"Well, mother, I thought we *were* excellent friends with her."

"Does it look like it when she refuses my invitation?"

"She may have her reasons."

"Her reasons! for not being able to come to the country, from Saturday to Monday, an old maid with nothing to do."

"Doesn't she state some cause in her letter?"

"She says something about one of those mad schemes she is always taking up. She wants to give the last blow to the respectability of her present address. She tells me she has bought a house in Rosemary Gardens, and means to turn it into a boarding-house."

"A boarding-house? Oh, delicious! Will she manage it herself?"

"Philippa! Whatever Jessica's faults may be, she is a lady."

Philippa was silent. She had her own ideas of what constituted a lady, but there were prejudices in her mother's soul which even she had not courage to surmount. She skipped round this one now, and said, adroitly—

"No doubt, mother, Miss Power will visit us another Saturday."

"As if that would do any good, child! I wanted her for *next* Saturday—for this day week."

Philippa was silent for a moment.

"I wish, mamsey," she said then, "that you would confide in me a little bit. Why do you want this queer, unique Jessica of yours to be here at the same time as my cousin Clarissa?"

Lady Jane was too much interested in her subject to notice Philippa's use of the objectionable term.

"Because Jessica is rich," she said, "enormously rich. It is good to let your cousins know that we are on the best of terms with one so wealthy, so eccentric, so benevolent. That is one reason. The second is this. Jessica always makes a pet of Mark. It will be good for his prospects with Clarissa, or, at any rate, with Clarissa's father, that he should appear to be a favourite with Miss Power. Then, too, Jessica has great influence over him. Men, my dear Philippa, are moulded by women. Mark can be guided in the direction which will lead to the furtherance of my plans."

Philippa was again silent for nearly a minute. Then she stooped down, and lightly pressed her mother's forehead with her own full red lips.

"Thank goodness for one thing, mamsey——"

"Child, child—that obnoxious word again——"

"Oh, pshaw! let it pass. I repeat I am thankful for one thing—that you don't make plans for me, but you know better. Ta, ta! now I am off to Mark."

Philippa found her brother sauntering lazily up and down the path which led from the library to the shabby little pretence of a tennis-court, of which the Manor alone could boast. He did not look up when the girl approached.

"Hullo!" she called, in a gay, semi-boyish manner, "here I come with a budget of news. What will you give me for it?"

"Nothing," answered Mark. "I am worried; I don't want to hear any news."

"Well, let me slip my hand through your arm. You can listen or not as you please. I must unburden myself."

Mark made no reply. Philippa established her slim hand cosily, and began—

"First of all, Jessica won't come. Secondly, Jessica has bought a boarding-house. Whether she will manage it or not personally is at present unknown. Mamsey being prejudiced, gives a decided opinion on that point, but the fact of her being prejudiced prevents her opinion from being of the smallest value. I incline to the belief that Jessica will be head of her own boarding-house, and, if so, I mean to go there the next time I visit London. Why, what is the matter, Mark? How jerky your arm is this morning. You are most unkind to my poor hand."

"I have told you that I am worried about things."

"And so is mother worried. What a good thing Philippa never is! By the way, Marky pet, who was that pretty little letter from this morning? The one you slipped into your pocket?—you remember."

Danby coloured slightly.

"From one of my tradespeople," he replied.

"Oh, Mark! Where do bad boys go? I won't ask you any more questions."

"I wish you wouldn't, Phil. I've got such a beastly headache I scarcely know what to do with myself."

"I'm ever so sorry. If I were a model sister, I'd say that I'd like to bear it for you, but, as I'm not, I can't make myself so agreeable. Good-bye, Marky."

When Philippa was out of sight, Danby took the letter which had excited her curiosity once more out of his pocket. He read its contents eagerly, his eyes roving over the words as if he would devour them, and something of that fierce, absolute sense of possession coming into his face which had filled it when he looked at Sybil in Rosemary Gardens. He was looking at her writing now. When he had read to the end of the closely-written pages, he turned and went back to the library. He kept an old portfolio in a corner there, and a bottle of ink, and a few bad pens. He sat down with his back to the window, and began to reply to Sybil's letter. He was not at all a good letter-writer, and now so many conflicting emotions were agitating him that he had less control over his mode of expression than usual.

He tore up several sheets of paper before he wrote a reply to his satisfaction. In the end the letter was very short, and only those who could read between the lines could make much out of it.

"I have got yours" (wrote Mark). "I am astonished—frightened. What you propose is impossible. I will come on Monday at three. Leave the matter an open question until then.

"Yours——"

Then followed a string of endearing names, and the letter was signed Sybil's "devoted lover until death."

END OF CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

LOVE'S CONQUEST.

PRESSED thy trembling arm, sweetheart,
Fondly I pressed,
And in that tender hour, love's reign
Our thoughts confessed:
It seemed as if the vast sweet night
Was filled with infinite delight.

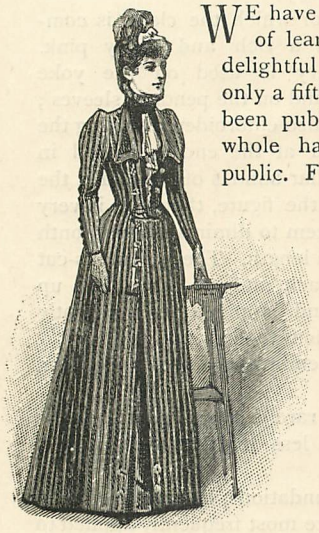
The radiant moon and all the stars
Watched far above:
They looked into our eyes and saw
The heaven of love:
And earth, and air, and star, and moon,
With a new glory round us shone.

I felt, and thou didst feel, sweetheart,
The tide of bliss:
Flowing within, and lip to lip,
Gave the warm kiss.
We whispered, "In love's light we shine,
Like the sweet stars, my heart as thine."

WILLIAM COWAN.

CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.—WHAT TO WEAR IN FEBRUARY.

I.—FROM OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENT.



WE have just had the opportunity of learning more of that most delightful Pepys. Up to last year only a fifth of his famous diary had been published. Now almost the whole has been given to the public. Few men have ever offered such an opportunity to their fellow-creatures of reading their inmost thoughts, and one portion is interesting to women, throwing light on the monetary side of masculine existence. Pepys tells us that one year he found, on casting up his accounts, that he had spent £55 on his own clothes, and only £12 on those of his wife. It is encouraging, you see, for although £12 then represented much more than that sum does now, dress was richer in texture and altogether more extravagant in its character than in our time. We hear much of feminine extravagance, but I am inclined to think there would be two sides to the story if accounts were looked into with the same faithfulness as on the part of our friend Pepys.

The vignette to this chapter shows the most useful style of dress for February. It admits of either long or short cloaks being worn over it, takes but little material, and is a most elegant cut. The Princess style is, without doubt, the fashion of the immediate future. The material of which the gown is made is one of the newest of the season. It has the appearance of being goffered, but in truth there is a thick upstanding cord on a groundwork of another colour. In the present instance the cords are pink, the foundation deep-dark green. Bodice and skirt are cut in one, the opening being at the side, which in the skirt widens toward the foot, showing a panel of green velvet. Large handsome cut steel buttons are used, four at the foot (two on either side of the skirt), six on the bodice, three on each side ; those on the right, where is the veritable fastening, are supplemented by four others. There are revers of green velvet on the bust, a narrow double band continued to the waist, and an inner fold of the same inside the revers. The high straight collar is made of velvet, and above it, is a thick ruche or lace coming close under the chin, such as was worn years ago when Marie Stuart was hated by her cousin, clever Queen Bess.

The sleeves are wide at the top and diminish towards the wrist, being buttoned on the outside of the arm. The bonnet is a close shape of velvet with blue bows. This corded material is made in many mixtures, and is elastic in its texture, for it can be drawn to the figure, and it can be allowed to follow its own will so far as the skirt is concerned.

Another curious cloth has bands of black braid, interwoven like tucks headed by rows of beads. Yet another has fringe, which is interwoven so that it forms part of the material also.

According to troublesome and dry statistics, the number of marriages increases just as the nation becomes more prosperous, and if this be so our prosperity is great, for marriage-bells would seem to be ringing gaily all days of the week.

Simplicity is the order of things in bridal array, and in our picture you will see a class of wedding dress which would be alike suitable to the bride of moderate means or to one of high degree.

The dress could be made of soft muslin or chiffon, fine cloth, brocade, soft silk, velvet, or satin, for all are worn, on the great occasion of woman's life. Satin is, however, the favourite fabric. Where money is no object, much silver thread is introduced into the

SISTERS.

brocade, which is frequently used for a distinct train with a satin skirt.

There is, however, no such train to the gown in our picture. The skirt is as simple as all skirts are now, and is bordered with a ruche of ostrich plumes. Where this is too costly, a tulle or silk ruche or a bouillonne of chiffon may be substituted. The bodice and skirt are put on together, the front being crossed with soft folding pieces of the fabric; there is a band at the waist. The only lace employed, is for one of the fashionable double frills which almost cover the upper portion of the bodice. A ruche of feathers encircles the throat. The sleeves are of the form our grandmothers called the "leg of mutton," wide at the top and narrow at the wrist. A voluminous veil of tulle covers the head, and in lieu of wreath there is just one tuft of orange blossom bud with narrow ribbon at the side of the head. Corresponding sprays are placed on the bodice on the right shoulder and waist.

Watteau trains are coming in for brides. The daughter of one of our most distinguished painters had such a one when she was married. It came from between the shoulders in a large knot, the outside being of brocade, the inside of satin.

Bridesmaids have been wearing white at many recent weddings, but another and curious custom would now seem to be coming in, viz., the introduction of black into bridesmaids' costumes. Some years ago no one ever wore a black silk gown at a wedding, but "*Nous avons changé tout cela*," and at most of the fashionable marriages of the day, the majority of the guests display a little black in their toilettes, if they are not entirely of that sombre hue. But it is only during the past year that black trimmings, black hats, and ribbon have been adopted by the bride's immediate surroundings.

The simple little gown worn by the bridesmaid in the sketch is of a terra-cotta pink oriental silk, shot with white. The skirt is somewhat scanty. At the hem there is a Louis XV. flounce of chiffon. It is spaced, and each division headed by a pompon bow. The bodice is made full, and there is a corselet belt, lined and well boned, of white silk, which fastens under the arms with three rosettes of narrow baby ribbon. The sleeves form one puff to the elbow, while the lower portion of the arm is swathed in white silk. Round the throat the black appears in a deep full silk ruche, and in a tuft of black ostrich feathers at the back of the flat Tudor hat, which has a soft silk crown.

Small brooches and bangles are the favourite gifts for the bridegroom to bestow on the bridesmaids, and they always carry flowers, mostly as posy bouquets, but occasionally in baskets.

II.—FROM OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.

FRENCH women have fewer dresses as a rule than the English, but they are handsomer and more thought out.

Fur plays an all-important part now in cloaks and gowns in Paris, and there is a great deal of magnificence in the trimmings.

The mantle in the picture has a narrow band of fur round the yoke and pendant sleeves. Indeed, hanging sleeves find their way on to most of the new cloaks, and, in diaphanous materials, to tea gowns and other garments, a mode which cannot certainly be accepted on the score of convenience.

Velvet is the material of which the cloak is composed, and the lining is a rich and lovely pink. Finely-wrought embroidery is used on the yoke (which is round in form), and on the pendant sleeves; there are long stole ends, also embroidered, edging the fronts. These are mitred at the ends, and fall in three long tassels. The collar band is of fur, and at the back the cloak is cut to the figure, though it is very narrow, for skirts would seem to diminish each month in width, and to increase in length. They are cross-cut down the centre of the back, and are easily held up by means of a button and loop placed sufficiently below the waist to allow them to clear the ground.

Stole-like ends of rich embroidery also appear on the sides of dresses.

Parisian dressmakers rarely allow gowns to be inexpensive, for if there is less material used there is more ornamentation.

Skirts now have no foundations, but are lined with silk; ruches and fringes are most frequently applied to the edges, or very handsome passementerie. In the present instance it is a close ruche of ostrich plumes. The gown is made of a handsome brocade of the new tone of silk, in which there is a great element of red. The trimming is a brocaded velvet, with the design outlined in gold embroidery spangles and tiny cabochons. This is employed for the side trimming on the skirt, and ends in a fringe of silk to match, and gold threads quite half a yard deep. The sleeves are also made of it. They are smaller and less high than they have been; indeed, there is a decided tendency to diminish the proportions of sleeves. They are gathered into a pleated cuff-piece six inches deep. The pleats are perpendicular, and have a soft silk ruche at both edges. The front side pieces are of the same embroidered velvet, also the collar band. This is a Princess dress, but at the waist in the centre of the front the velvet band displays a triple row of gold cabochons; the front is a full crossway piece of the plain brocade.

Hats are greatly in vogue among the fashionable women of France, who dress their hair to assimilate with the style of head-gear. Felt is the ordinary material for winter hats, and some shapes are covered with velvet. But we are beginning to look for the advent of Spring. Straw hats are appearing in the milliners' show-rooms. The shapes depicted here are among the most fashionable. The one accompanying the brocaded gown has the brim bent downwards in the centre of the front, a style becoming to the soft curls or turnback Pompadour roll most generally in vogue. The torsade of velvet surrounding the almost invisible crown is emphasised by a twist of velvet in front, and is thrust through at one side by a gilt dagger. The brim turns up at the back and has a triple ostrich plume with osprey in the middle, soft bows of ribbon being introduced beneath, meeting

the coil of hair. A black straw hat is worn with the mantle, the crown is bordered with jet vandyked trimming, and a couple of ostrich tips are introduced in front, longer ones falling on the hair behind, and these are surmounted by a jet ostrich and osprey aigrette.

Square black hats of medium proportions are now lined with a colour and bound with astrachan. There is a point in the centre of the back and front and at each side. Crowns are very varied in form, some are round and but slightly blocked, some are formed of a gathering of silk from a button in the centre, others are soft and pleated like a Tudor cap, while others, again, have a mushroom crown or are kilted in accordion pleats. Sometimes the crown is entirely formed of ostrich feathers.

French modes abjure high collars, which, unless they are skilfully managed, are apt to be disfiguring. Cloaks and dresses generally display a close-fitting band round the throat. But, frequently, starting from the base of this band there is a collar from four to five inches deep, lined with buckram, so that it can be rolled back. Carriage cloaks of fine-faced cloth have velvet collars embroidered all over in beads of this style, and thence fall either three-quarter length, or to the feet; they are fully gathered, so that they wrap well over in front. They are frequently bordered to the depth of half a yard, with scrolls of velvet appliqué, and edged with cord. Pink and red is in favour for cloaks, also stone colour, and watercress green, which is equally suitable for evening or day wear.

A CONSTITUTIONAL.

Fawn has held its own for the last ten years. It has been worn with cream, gold, brown, heliotrope, and now mostly with green. So many brides select the mixture for their going-away dresses.

Black silk and velvet gowns, and red silk and velvet gowns, are elaborately trimmed with jet, and some of the old Medicis puffed sleeves, with perpendicular bands of velvet of huge proportions, are once more to the front. On a tall and stately figure they are imposing.

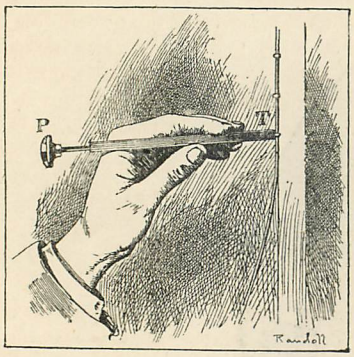
Some of the great dressmakers are employing three brocades of the same pattern, but of different colour in one dress—brown, pink, and yellow, for example.

THE GATHERER:

AN ILLUSTRATED RECORD OF INVENTION, DISCOVERY, LITERATURE, AND SCIENCE.

Correspondents are requested, when applying to the Editor for the names and addresses of the persons from whom further particulars respecting the articles in the GATHERER may be obtained, to forward a stamped and addressed envelope for reply, and in the case of inventors submitting specimens for notice, to prepay the carriage. The Editor cannot in any case guarantee absolute certainty of information, nor can he pledge himself to notice every article or work submitted.

A Handy Staple-Driver.



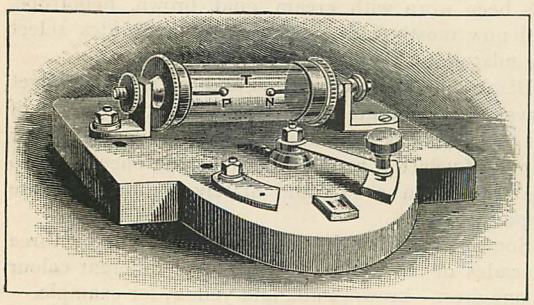
A useful staple for running bell and other wires is shown in our engraving. It consists of a rectangular tube, T, of a size adapted to the staples, and in which is a plunger, P, with a stroke of about half an inch. The staple is put in the end of the tube, and the points placed over the wire. A blow on the plunger fixes the staple. The tube is then removed, and the staple driven home with a hammer in the ordinary way.

A New Weigher.

Señor Joce Solar, of Barcelona, has brought out a balance which weighs either large or small articles. This is accomplished by having one scale pan very large, the other small, and balancing on the steelyard principle. The balance also checks the price by means of a third pan which moves along the steelyard arm, which is graduated in money values. The rate per kilogramme being known, the money pan is moved to that position on the arm and money put in it until it balances the weight of the article. The amount of money put in is the price of the article.

An Electric Fault Detector.

The little apparatus shown in the engraving is intended for use in households which are provided with the electric light. It consists of a glass tube, T, containing a liquid into which two metal poles, P, N, project from the ends of the tube. One of these poles is connected to "earth," and the other is touched by the positive or negative wire of the electric installation.



If there is a fault on one or other of these wires the liquid in the tube becomes coloured at one of the poles in the tube. The device is simple and requires no electrical knowledge on the part of the user.

The Wyandot Cave.

The newspapers have informed us that another Mammoth cave like that of Kentucky has been discovered in Josephine county, Oregon, containing many beautiful galleries adorned with translucent stalactites and milk-white columns of alabaster, and diversified with ponds, streams, and falls of clear water, one of which is 30 feet high. It was explored for several miles and traces of bears were found inside. We shall probably hear more about it by and by, and in the meantime we may draw attention to the brave feat of three boys who, in company with Mr. Frank Rothrock, recently explored a third Mammoth cave in Indiana, namely, that known as the Wyandot Cave. They took with them a stock of candles and after hours of trying and perilous risks of life and limb, during which they advanced for miles into parts of the cave never before visited, they lost their way just as their stock of candles began to fail. Descending into a kind of pit as a last resource—a pit from which they would not have had any strength left to climb out—they luckily came upon a ladder they had left behind them, and recovered their way out.

A Picture Telegraph.

The "Electro-artograph," as it is called, is an attempt to transmit photographs by electricity, or in other words, to engrave by telegraph. It is the invention of Mr. Amstutz of Cleveland, Ohio, and is to a certain extent successful, as the figures will show. The process consists in photographing the picture on a "stripping film" of gelatine and bichromate of potassium. Such a photograph washed with lukewarm water to remove the portions not hardened by the action of the light, gives a picture in relief, which is more or less high according to the tones of the original. The next step is to vary the strength of current in the telegraph wire according to the variations of light and shade in the picture, that is to say, according to the heights and depths of the etched film. This is

FIG. 1.

done by an arrangement similar to the stylus which moves over the indentations on the wax surface of the phonograph. The point of the style passes over every part of the film and trips up and down according to the degree of relief. By a multiplying lever its movements up and down are caused to depress a series of light keys which send electric currents into the line. If the relief is very low only one key is depressed, and more keys are closed in proportion to the depth of the relief. The current is thus varied in strength according to the degree of relief on the film. At the receiving end the current passes through an electro-magnet, which bears with more or less force on a travelling graver according to the strength of the current, and the design is cut in a surface of wax from which an electrotype can be obtained for printing purposes. Fig. 1 represents a portrait on the film, which was sent over a line twenty miles long, the reproduction being shown on the same scale in Fig. 2. The inventor hopes to improve his method and to render it a useful adjunct to modern journalism. The time occupied in sending an illustration the width of a newspaper column need not, it is stated, be more than ten minutes, and it is claimed that impressions can be made from the wax by papier maché, so that the engraving can be directly stereotyped in the ordinary way.

FIG. 2.

The Decay of Saffron Cultivation.

About three hundred years ago there was cultivated in this country, especially about Saffron Walden in Essex, a plant of considerable interest—namely, the Saffron Crocus (*Crocus sativus*). It has long since ceased to be known as a crop plant with us, though it is said its growth still lingered in some parts of England down to 1829. At the present day it is grown chiefly in France, Spain, and Italy, and also to a small extent in Persia, North India, and China. Its culture in the East goes back to remote antiquity. In Spain it did not spread till the tenth century and reached France and England about the fourteenth. Saffron formerly had a reputation as a stimulant and antispasmodic and was likewise, and is still occasionally, given to children to develop eruption in suspected measles. Its chief use at the present time is as a colouring and flavouring agent and as a condiment, which uses still linger on the Continent, and, to a less extent, in Cornwall. Genuine saffron consists of the stigmas picked out from each separate flower, and as it takes 7,000 to 8,000 flowers to yield three and a half ounces of marketable saffron it is an expensive article, and very liable to adulteration, the florets of Safflower (*Carthamus tinctorius*) being mostly used. In Spain the owners have announced their intention at the end of the present season to dig up the bulbs and seek a more remunerative culture.

A Fire Tell-tale.

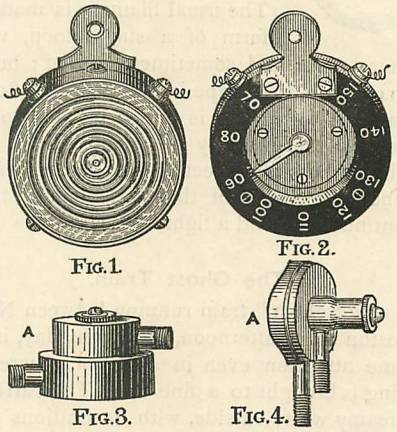


FIG. 1. FIG. 2. FIG. 3. FIG. 4.

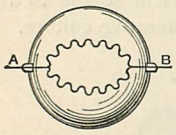
The device which we illustrate, back and front, in Figs. 1 and 2, is intended to give warning of an excessive rise of temperature on the outbreak of a fire by the ringing of an electric bell. The heat causes a corrugated diaphragm to close the circuit of the battery and ring the bell, and the apparatus can be set by means of the pointer (Fig. 2) to indicate at any given temperature. Figs. 3 and 4 are two forms of regulator for gas, fires, and urns, by which the heat is kept within bounds. Inside the chamber, A, A, there is a series of sensitive diaphragms which expand and contract with changes of temperature, and open or close the passage for the gas, thus controlling the supply according to the temperature required. While upon this subject we may draw attention to a new fire extinguisher which has been introduced by some Canadian inventors. The mixture of water and carbonic dioxide it contains is under the very high pressure of 1,000 lbs. to the square inch, and, on escaping from the cylinder containing it, is frozen by the cold due to its sudden expansion. The chilling effect of the cold is thus added to the choking effect of the gas.

Eucalyptus and Sick-rooms.

The custom of placing green boughs of the eucalyptus or blue gum tree in sick rooms is extending

in Australia. It is stated that the volatile perfume has a favourable effect on consumptive patients, and is also able to promote sleep. Dr. Curgeven expresses his opinion that if placed under the sick bed in cases of scarlet fever, the boughs will disinfect it and every article in the room. While on the subject, we may mention that a German investigator has recently examined the dust of railway carriages in which consumptives are taken to a hospital near Berlin, and found it to contain the bacilli of that disease. It would be well if such carriages were thoroughly disinfected after use.

The Corona Electric Lamp.



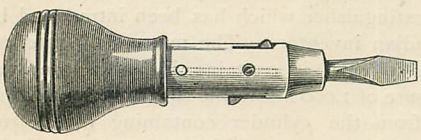
A new form of filament for electric incandescent lamps has been introduced by Mr. Bailley, and can now be obtained from lamp makers. The usual filament is made in the form of a single loop, which is sometimes plain and sometimes twisted; but in the "corona" lamp, the shape is that of a wavy circlet or diadem, and the circle is supported horizontally in the middle of the bulb by two electrodes, A, B. This form gives a beautiful sheet of light in the heart of the bulb, and if one half of the circle breaks, the other half continues to yield a light.

The Ghost Train.

The new "ghost" train running between New York and Boston every afternoon, except Sunday, is attracting some attention even in America, where railway travelling is brought to a fine art. The carriages are of a creamy white outside, with decorations in gold; all the cars, which are of the Pullman order, have paper wheels, and are brightly illuminated with gas jets after dark. The gas is carried in cylinders under each car. The cars are heated with Baker's heaters. Each train consists of a combination car, with luggage van and smoking-room. The latter is carpeted, furnished with willow chairs, and upholstered like an hotel room. The drawing-room cars have revolving and reclining chairs, and many other conveniences. There is no distinction of class, the humblest traveller being free to enjoy all the comforts of the train.

A Ratchet Screw-driver.

The screw-driver which is shown in the figure, has been brought out by an American firm, and is con-

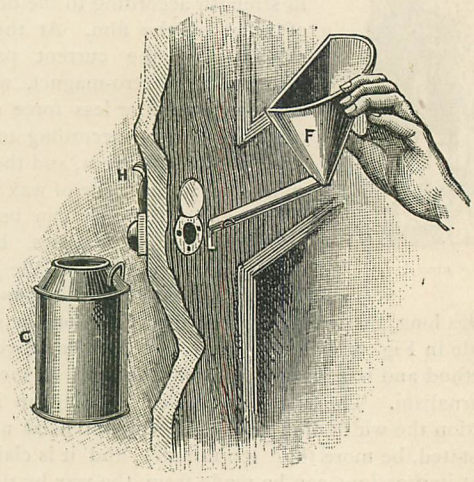


structed on the ratchet principle, so as to allow the hand to keep its hold of the handle. The motion takes place between the handle and a spindle controlled by a movable ratchet. A simple movement of the projecting panel up or down enables the driver to be used for a right or left hand screw.

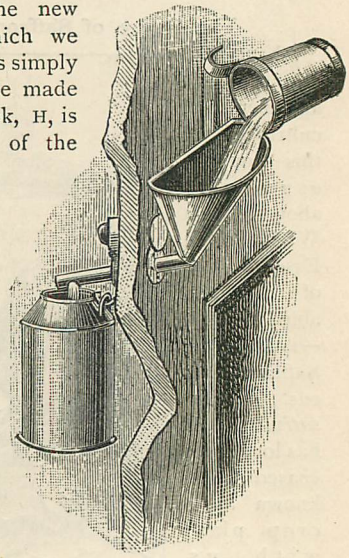
Utilising Refuse.

A method of utilising the contents of the dust-cart is now in operation at Chelsea. The cart is tipped into a machine, and the contents undergo a sorting and sifting action, the paper, straw, rags, tin, etc., being separated, and the offensive material ground up with the cinders and deodorised. The ashes find a sale among brick-makers, and by mixing them with pitch they can be pressed into briquettes for fuel. The paper is reduced to pulp, and the straw is employed in making straw boards.

A Milk-Receiver.



The practice of leaving milk at house-doors in cans or pitchers is attended with inconvenience, if not risk, and hence the new plan of delivery which we illustrate. The milk is simply poured through a hole made in the door. A hook, H, is fitted to the inside of the door and arranged to open the hole when the can, C, is hung upon it. The milkman displaces the lid, L, and puts his funnel, F, through the orifice, as shown in the second figure. When the can is removed from the hook, the hole is automatically closed again.



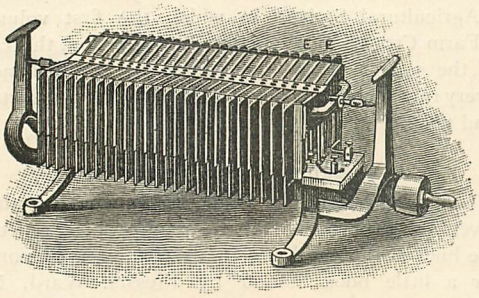
A Steel Chimney.

A chimney of steel, 250 feet high and 9 feet 5 inches in outer diameter, will be one of the features of the Chicago Exhibition. The steel will be $\frac{3}{8}$ inch thick at the bottom and $\frac{5}{32}$ inch thick at the top; and it will

be lined with brick below and tiles above, the lining being supported every 25 feet by angle irons rivetted to the steel shell. Had the stack been entirely constructed of brick it would have been 16 feet 6 inches in outer diameter.

The Gulcher Thermo-pile.

One of the most interesting exhibits at a recent electrical exhibition was the Gulcher pile for deriving electricity from heat. The apparatus is illustrated in the figure. It contains 50 elements placed in parallel rows on a bed of slate. Each element, E E, consists of a nickel tube joined to a prism of an alloy



—antimony with another metal. The elements are insulated with asbestos, and heated with gas jets, one flame to each element. As soon as the gas is lighted the current flows, and attains its maximum strength of 5 ampères, with an electro-motive force of 4 volts. A smaller pile of 25 elements yields the same number of ampères at 2 volts. The gas consumed in these piles is 200 and 100 litres an hour respectively.

Oyster Cages.

A French oyster grower has introduced a novel device for promoting the culture of oysters. It consists of a tray about two feet square and four inches deep, made of wire network, and supported by an iron frame. The oysters are laid in the trays, and these cages are ranged on the frames in tiers, one above another. If the depth permits of it, the frames may rest on the bottom, otherwise they are suspended from rafts or floats. The oysters are thus kept in a circulation of favourable water, and out of the reach of unsuitable bottoms, or hereditary enemies, such as "five-fingers" and other animals.

Home Novelties.

To many of our readers the most interesting class of inventions is that which includes the little improvements and modifications in household utensils. The great discoveries of science may ultimately revolutionise our domestic economy, but their immediate effect on the home is not large. It is different with a novelty for the kitchen, the table, or the sick-room, the advantage of which can be procured at small cost, and at once. We have before us, for instance, a new pie-dish, with an overhanging rim, thanks to which the cook is enabled to handle or turn a pie in the oven without fear of spoiling the pastry or crust, and without stooping, on her part, so close to the oven, as is necessary with the old form. Probably this little improvement will save many a burnt knuckle and scorched face. Then, for the table, there has just been brought out a new carving-dish for poultry, in which the novel feature is an upright metal spike fixed in the centre of the dish, that secures the bird firmly under the carver's hand, and enables him to get gravy from the dish without fear of the bird slipping on to the table-cloth. As the spike can be removed when the dish requires washing, there is no danger of its doing damage when it is not in use. And, lastly, for the sick-room, we have before us a bronchitis tube, which can readily be attached to any ordinary kettle and so make a "bronchitis kettle" of it. The method of attachment is very simple. A couple of discs, of different sizes, are supplied with the tube, and the one which more nearly corresponds with the aperture of the kettle-lid is used to close over that opening, and is held by a sliding loop of wire to the socket on which is fitted the long tube.

An Electric Parcel Exchange.

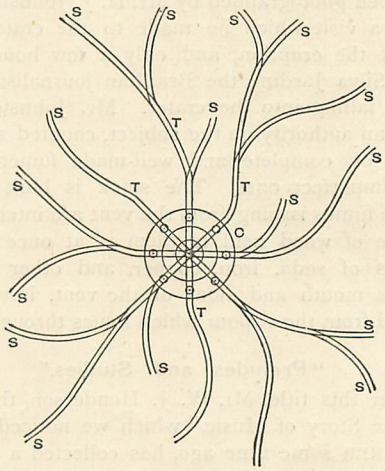


FIG. 1.

Mr. A. R. Bennett, M.I.E.E., has developed a system of carrying parcels by electricity, which contains some novel features. Fig. 1 represents a general plan of his lines, which would be small electric railways laid in tubes, preferably underground. The central exchange is shown at C, to and from which the parcels would circulate by the branch lines, T, T, to the subscribers' sidings, S, S. Fig. 2 shows a section of the tubes in which T, T' are the parcel trains, running on rails, R, R, by means of electricity conveyed along parallel conductors, P C, and collected from these by brushes, C, C¹, to feed the electric motors driving the trains. Mr. Bennett thinks that if such a

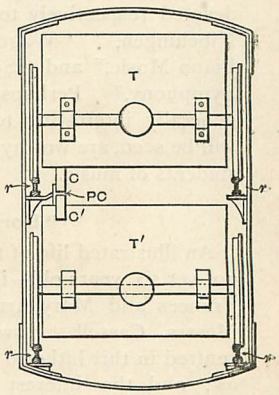


FIG. 2.

system were introduced into large cities, such as London, the vehicular traffic of the streets would be greatly diminished.

An Aluminium Steamboat.

One of the most recent novelties is a small steamboat entirely built of aluminium, which some regard as the "metal of the future." It is twenty feet long by five feet wide, and the screw, as well as the engines and hull, are of aluminium. The motor is worked by naphtha, and develops two horse-power. One of the advantages of this metal for ships is its lightness, and, of course, its white colour and durability are also in its favour, especially for pleasure craft. We may add here that aluminium is found to render steel castings wonderfully sound and tough when added to the ingots.

Volcanic Chimneys of Vesuvius.

Several of the curious fumeroles or lava chimney stacks formed during the recent eruption of Vesuvius have been photographed by Mr. H. J. Johnston-Lavis, during a visit which he made to the crater at the time of the eruption, and only a few hours before Señor Silva Jardim, the Brazilian journalist, lost his life by falling into the crater. Mr. Johnston-Lavis, who is an authority on the subject, counted seven examples of complete and well-made fumeroles and many imperfect ones. The stack is built of lava, and the fumes issuing from the vent are intensely hot. A piece of wood held in them is at once charred. Crystals of soda, iron, copper, and other minerals line the mouth and sides of the vent, having been secreted from the vapour which issues through it.

"Preludes and Studies."

Under this title, Mr. W. J. Henderson, the author of "The Story of Music," which we noticed in THE GATHERER some time ago, has collected a series of critical papers on "Musical Themes of the Day," published by Messrs. Longman in a very handy volume. We cannot give a better idea of the work than by enumerating its four divisions, which are devoted respectively to "A Study of 'Der Ring des Nibelungen,'" "Wagneriana," "The Evolution of Piano Music," and "Schumann and the Programme-Symphony." Perhaps the third will prove most generally interesting to English readers, but all, as will be seen, are worthy the attention of professors and students of music.

"Born a King."

An illustrated life of the baby-king of Spain—who is not yet six years old—is given us, under this title, by Frances and Mary Arnold-Forster, and published by Messrs. Cassell. How far the hopes of Spain are centred in this hitherto frail child-life our authors show us; and the interest with which news from his sick-room was awaited all over Europe during his illness two years ago ought to be a good omen for the popularity of this prettily-told tale of what is, we hope, but the beginning of a long life.

On Teaching Agriculture.

A text-book on agriculture, written by Dr. Henry J. Webb, B.Sc., the Principal of the Agricultural College, Aspatria, has just been added to Messrs. Longman's Elementary Science Manuals. Its author expressly disclaims any intention of teaching farmers their own business. His object is rather to put a text-book in the hands of young students and intending colonists, and, so far as we can judge, he has succeeded admirably. The advance in our educational methods is shown in nothing more than in our teaching of these special subjects. In this connection we may fittingly say that Messrs. Cassell also have just launched an "Agricultural Series," in which the first volume is "Farm Crops," by Professor J. Wrightson, the Editor of the series. This book should be in the hands of every rural schoolmaster and of all technical lecturers and teachers.

Judging by Appearances.

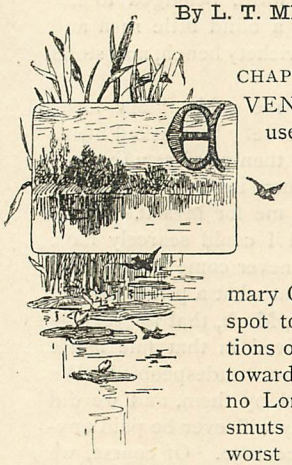
Our contributor, Mr. Henry Frith, who has already given us hand-books on the reading of character in the lines of the hand and in caligraphy, is responsible for a little book issued by Messrs. Ward, Lock, Bowden and Co., on "How to Read Character in Features, Forms, and Faces." "Every action of an individual," he says in his introductory chapter, "is characteristic of that particular individual, and indicates the character of his mind; it is the outward and visible sign of the inward spirit. . . . . The gait, the mode of carrying the head, the movement of the arms, all indicate the manner of men we are, and all these traits must be studied from the living models we see every day." Now, despite the proverbial unwisdom of judging by appearances, there can be no doubt that our involuntary actions do afford some, and even to an extent reliable, data upon which to go in judging the character of those around us. The great danger is in "dabbling" in the art of character-reading and drawing definite conclusions in particular cases under what are only meant to be general laws. Take, for instance, the forehead as a typical feature from which to judge. "When we were young," says Mr. Frith, "a high forehead was always pointed out to us as a type of great intellect and natural talent. A low forehead was taken to represent a want of cleverness." Now he says "The reading man, who is stored with knowledge and who has the faculty for study, appears with a high forehead, the various bumps indicating his natural or acquired tastes. He is the compiler: the very industrious, well-informed man, a good preacher, perhaps, a man of cramming—full of information from reading, not *generally* from observation. The low, wide band of forehead is different in its signification. These foreheads are those of imaginative, brilliant, intuitively sharp, clever men, the writers of adventure and 'boys'' literature. There is more natural talent inside the low forehead than behind the high one. The latter tells us of a talent for study." Mr. Frith honestly points out the limitation of the art he is describing, and the result is a work that is interesting, without being misleading.

(*Drawn by* PERCY TARRANT.)

THE LADY OF THE MANOR.—II. WHAT WILL SHE SAY?

OUT OF THE FASHION.

By L. T. MEADE, Author of "Engaged to be Married," "Scamp and I," etc. etc.



CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

EVEN deserted gardens have their uses; even weeds can grow apace without being all on the side of bad. The square of ground in the centre of that other square which was known as Rosemary Gardens was certainly not a spot to be desired for any attractions of its own on a hot afternoon towards the end of July. In July no London trees look well; the smuts have almost done their worst with them by that time; they look parched and shrivelled; in fact, the beautiful creatures are thickly coated with dirt.

The tender green of most young vegetable life makes these same trees worth beholding early in May, but at the end of July all freshness has departed, and they are no longer pleasant to the sight.

Even in May the square of ground in Rosemary Gardens was a poor place. In July it was positively hideous.

Nevertheless this so-called "garden" had its advantages, for those who went there were as sure of privacy as they would have been many miles from the haunts of men.

About three o'clock on Monday afternoon Sybil Ross went into the Square garden to meet her lover. She had dressed herself with extreme care for the meeting; her dress was of delicate pink cambric; on her head she wore a large, picturesque, black lace hat. The hat had a bunch of pink roses in it.

Sybil was one of those girls who looked charming in pink. For some reason it toned with her own colouring, making her eyes look deeper and bluer, her complexion more peach-like in its bloom, her hair a ruddier gold than any other colour would. Pink made Sybil look a veritable rosebud. She tripped across the ugly garden now, and in a moment was in her lover's arms.

Danby was really Sybil's lover. He cared for her with a fierce passion; he wanted to have her, to hold her. Life without her seemed insupportable. Such a passion might or might not last, but, while it was paramount in such a turbulent, unruly spirit as animated Mark Danby's breast, it was overmastering in its power.

For a few minutes this pair of young lovers only looked at one another, too happy to be together to care to give utterance to any words. The ugly, deserted garden was to them as if all the flowers of Paradise grew there, and as if all the birds that sang to Adam were making music for their ears.

Sybil was the first to break the spell.

"Oh, Mark," she said with a long, deep sigh, "your letter gave me such a fright. I was miserable after I read it."

On hearing these words Mark pulled himself together. He had not come into the Square just to kiss Sybil, and to hold her hand. He had a task to get through—not a pleasant one.

"I want to talk to you very seriously," he began.

"Oh, don't, Mark! your eyes quite frighten me."

"Take my hand, Sybil; don't look at my eyes. Listen to my words. Sybil, I have not told my mother yet that we are engaged."

"Oh!"

Sybil shrank a little away from Mark.

"I will tell her, of course, my darling, and she'll thank me for bringing her anything half as sweet as you. But just at present I know she has got all kinds of ideas in her head about me."

"What ideas, Mark?"

Sybil no longer leant against Danby. She sat a little away from him, the damask in her cheeks growing deeper and deeper.

"Why, puss, you are not vexed?" said Mark. "What *are* a mother's ideas to a man who has given his whole heart to a lovely, bewitching little creature like you? My mother doesn't know you, Sybil."

"But what are her ideas?"

"Oh, I can't exactly tell you. I suppose she would like me to marry some hideous old thing with a lot of money. Not that she has ever said as much. But I can see the way the wind blows."

"Marry the old thing then, Mark. Go away and marry her!"

Sybil had risen; her lips were trembling, her eyes full of tears. She looked prettier than she had ever looked before, in her helpless, impotent little rage, which she knew in her heart of hearts she could only keep up for a moment or two.

Mark drew her to him and kissed her again.

"There, that is my only answer to you, Sybil," he said. "But now I have a serious matter to talk over with you. I am not going to tell my mother yet that we are engaged, but I will very soon. Sybil, what *was* that rubbish you wrote to me about you and your sisters turning No. 80 into a boarding-house?"

"Oh, Mark, don't you like it? We are ever so pleased and excited. It is dear Jessica Power's doing. She has bought the house and the furniture, and she will find the boarders, and the money to board them with. Maggie and Kitty are to housekeep, and Betty is to be accountant, and I, my dear sir," here Sybil dropped a bewitching curtesy, "am to represent the ornamental member of the staff. I am to look as pretty as I can myself, and I am to keep the house sweet, and bright, and gay, and I am to entertain the visitors."

"Oh! And how will you entertain them, pray?"

"Why, sing to them, and play to them, and tell gay little stories, and get up round games in the evening Oh, there are hundreds of ways."

"Doubtless," replied Mark in a gloomy voice. "And some of the boarders will be young men, perhaps? And you will play and sing for *them*, and look pretty for them, and keep the house gay and bright and charming for their benefit?"

"No, Mark; we are not going to have young men boarders. Jessica does not think that would do. The house is to be a boarding-house for girls—lady girls, who know how to act as ladies. And Jessica wishes it to be more than a boarding-house. She wants it to be a home."

"And you are to wear yourself to a skeleton, keeping these maidens amused? I should imagine that of all the trying occupations under the sun women making endless mirth for one another must be one of the worst."

"But I dare say there'll be lots of young men, too, for, of course, the girls must be allowed to see their friends at No. 80, and perhaps some of the young girls and the men will be like you and like me, Mark. It will be very interesting to watch them."

"Now look here, Sybil. This thing can't be. I have listened to you long enough. My darling, I don't want to frighten you, but I *cannot* submit to the idea of the girl who is to be my wife wearing herself out as a common boarding-house drudge. For that is what it amounts to. Sybil, if I were to tell my mother that I had engaged myself to a girl who occupied herself in the manner you have just described, it would kill her, it really would. My mother is a proud woman, and she'd simply die of it. I dare not run the risk. Sybil, I've come here to-day to ask you to give it up."

"But, Mark, we are poor. Dear Mark, be reasonable. Oh, I won't be one scrap less a lady. Dear Mark, don't look at me like that."

"Socially you will be no longer a lady, Sybil."

Mark got up now, and absolutely turned his back. He walked a few paces away, and stood looking gloomily across the ugly garden, poking at the dusty, hard ground with the point of a little cane which he carried.

Now, had Sybil had one scrap of spirit, she would have stolen away at that moment, and given Mark Danby up there and then. But, instead of doing this, the poor little soul sat crouched up in a corner of the rickety old bench, her eyes growing very big and frightened, and her lips very piteous.

Mark was saying most detestable things; all the best part in her nature cried out against him—and yet—and yet—still he was her idol—her king, and the King could do no wrong. Oh, she hated him. How could he be so mean as to tell her she would not be a lady because she earned her bread honestly? But, oh, again, she *could* not hate him; for he was her very own Mark, to whom she had given herself absolutely and for ever.

She raised her eyes timidly, and looked at the back of her hero. Mark had those square shoulders and that well-knit figure which young Britishers adore. Sybil could not help a small, comforting glow of pride stealing back into her heart as she reflected that those shoulders, and that adorable form, belonged to her own acknowledged lover. In a blind little rush and tempest of feeling, she left the rickety bench, and stood in front of Mark.

"I don't agree with you," she said. "My ideas and yours are altogether at issue. You asked me to marry you some days ago, and then you knew that my father had fled from the country in dishonour. But you loved me, and you wanted me for myself. When you knew what my father did I could scarcely have blamed you, Mark, if you had never come back to me. When you *did* come, I thought what a prince among men you were. Do you know, Mark, that for years—for at least two years—we lived in that fine house over there on the charity of our tradespeople? We were clothed by them, and fed by them, and we did not pay them. I doubt if they will ever be paid anything beyond a very small percentage. Of course, we girls did not do it knowingly; still the fact remains that we did it. When you engaged yourself to me last week, Mark, did it enter into your head that you were going to marry a girl who had ceased to be a lady?"

"That is nonsense!" responded Danby. "Your father is not the first man who has failed; you talk like a child."

"I don't. I talk like an honourable woman. I don't think I was a lady during those years when I lived on what did not belong to me; but I think when I help to take care of Jessica's boarding-house that I shall be the real kind of honourable lady that God meant me to be."

Danby looked into Sybil's eyes. They were always sweet in their expression. Now the suffering soul which filled them brought a light into their depths before which his own fell.

"Look here," he said after a pause in which he had the grace to feel ashamed of himself, "I cannot argue with you, Syb. You may be right, but the world doesn't look at things in that way, and the fact is you must give up taking any share in that boarding-house if you intend to become engaged to me."

"But, Mark, how am I to earn my bread?"

"Has not your uncle, Mr. Ross, offered you a home?"

"Oh, Mark!"

"My darling, I want you to go there for a little. Not for long, for we must be married soon. Of that I am determined. I come into a little bit of property when I am twenty-five, and, if nothing better offers, we can start housekeeping on that, only you must not have part or lot in the boarding-house scheme, Sybil."

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

IT took Margaret Ross and her sisters twenty-four hours to think over Miss Power's scheme. At the end of that time they accepted the proposal she had made them. They did this with a little doubt and a certain

amount of hesitation. They did not say to themselves, "We are going down irretrievably in the social scale," but nevertheless, they felt it, and they took the plunge as one gets into a cold bath—with a little reluctance.

Then came the reaction. They had done right, and their spirits began to glow; their consciences smiled on them, and an easy conscience is seldom unaccompanied by happiness. Day after day they liked the scheme of the boarding-house better and better; the social descent was forgotten in the interest of the work itself. A great burden of care seemed to have been lifted from four pairs of young shoulders, and the girls could laugh merrily, and be so cheerful that censorious neighbours pronounced them heartless.

By the way, it is wonderful how many good people preach contentment and resignation in the midst of affliction, and then glare at the afflicted ones if they happen to wear smiling faces. "Heartless" the victims are instantly designated.

Now the four Ross girls were spoken of as destitute of feeling by a good many of the inhabitants of Rosemary Gardens just then; but, as they did not care what the neighbours thought, this fact was unlikely to trouble them.

Finding her scheme was working so admirably, Miss Power threw herself into it heart and soul. She, Margaret and Kitty spent many long mornings together. The linen-room was over-hauled, the china presses were examined, the contents of the glass cupboard turned out. Then came delightful expeditions to different noted shops, where the diminished stores could be replenished, and the house put into apple-pie order.

Miss Power intended the boarding-house to be ready for occupation on the first of September, and the girls had just a month to make all their preparations. Maggie once asked rather wonderingly, "Suppose no boarders come?" but Miss Power's dark eyes fairly ran over with merriment on hearing this.

"Oh, my love," she said, "the house will be full, from attic to cellar. You leave that part of the business to me, my dear girls."

The first cloud which darkened the sunshine of the boarding-house idea came from Sybil. The other girls were perhaps too busy to notice that little Nineteen-year-old looked grave when they laughed; that, when she did smile and joke, the mirth was of rather a forced character. The best girls will be selfish when they are very much occupied, but had any of the other three guessed how sore poor Sybil's warm heart felt, they would have cried by the hour with her out of sympathy.

Since her interview with Mark, Sybil had, however, managed to elude suspicion, but at last the day came when she felt she must inflict a cruel blow both on herself and her sisters.

The morning post brought a letter from Uncle David Ross. It was a thick letter encased in a square envelope. The front of the envelope was addressed to

"MISS SYBIL ROSS,
"80, Rosemary Gardens."

The back had "SHORTLANDS" printed in large, ugly capitals across its flap. There was a Yorkshire postmark as well: no one could for an instant mistake the letter.

Sybil turned pink and then white when she received it.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Kitty. "That letter is from poor old Uncle David. What a shame! We have been so busy we never wrote to the poor old boy to tell him of our change of plans."

"I wish he heard you speak of him as a 'Poor Old Boy,'" laughed Betty. "He would be angry with you, Kit."

"What care I?" responded Kitty. "Maggie, please pass me the toast; I'm regularly famished. Thanks to Jessica, the old dear can't do us much harm now, and I am free to speak of him as I please. Oh! shall I ever forget the way he sat and looked round the drawing-room that awful morning when he came intending to crush us? He'd have done it, too, if it hadn't been for darling Jessica."

"Sybil, dear, why don't you open your letter?" asked Margaret. She looked kindly at her younger sister, and noticed for the first time that she was only playing with her breakfast.

"That letter contains a cheque," said Kitty. "A cheque for your second-class fare to Shortlands, Syb. You'll have to send it back to-day. Be sure you write a pretty note of thanks with it."

To the astonishment of the other three girls, Sybil's reply to this innocent speech was a burst of tears, a rush across the room, and an absolute collapse into Maggie's outstretched arms.

"What is it?" exclaimed Kitty and Betty. "What is wrong?"

"Hush," replied Maggie. "The child has a trouble on her. She would not sob like this for nothing. Would you like to be alone with me, Sybil darling? Shall we go into my little study?"

"For goodness' sake, don't leave us out in the cold!" said Betty. "Aren't we all sisters, and doesn't Syb know that we'd half-kill anyone who was unkind to her. There, Syb, you don't mind my kneeling here and rubbing your cold shaking hand, do you?"

"And you always *did* say that Kitty's touch made your headache go away. You don't want poor Kit not to touch your gold locks, Syb?" asked Kitty.

"I *love* her to touch them!" said Sybil, speaking with sudden passion. "Your hand is just darling, Betty, and Maggie, oh, Maggie—*what* the feel of your arm is to me! But I must go away, I must; I must go and live with Uncle David Ross."

"You must go and live with Uncle David Ross?" almost screamed Kitty, who was of a very excitable temperament. "Have you gone right out of your mind, Sybil? Why, you are to stay here, and be the ornament of the boarding-house, and Jessica is to pay you forty pounds a year. What *are* you talking in that wild fashion for?"

"I must go to Uncle David," said Sybil. "It isn't wild, it's true; I must keep that cheque, and I must go to Shortlands. I must be Muriel's companion. You can't shake my resolve, any of you; I have promised, and I must do it."

"Whom have you made this promise to, darling?" asked Margaret.

"To—to—Mark."

"Oh!"

Betty left off stroking Sybil's hand, and Kitty no longer touched her head; Margaret's arms, however, remained as firmly round her slight waist as ever, and it was to Margaret she now spoke.

"You know, Maggie, I must do what Mark wishes."

"When you are married to him, perhaps," muttered Betty.

"*If* you marry him!" exclaimed Kitty.

"I must do what Mark wishes," repeated Sybil in a dreary tone. Then, seeing the mocking smile on Betty's face, her cheeks flushed and her eyes glowed. She drew herself gently away from Margaret, and stood erect.

"I love to do what Mark wishes! I dare anyone to prevent me."

"Oh, good gracious!" exclaimed Betty.

"Tell us what you mean, dear," said Margaret, trying to take the excited girl's hand.

"I mean this," answered Sybil. "I told Mark about the boarding-house, and he—he was shocked. And he—he said—I should not be a lady if I did what I—I meant to do. I shouldn't be a lady socially. Mark said I must go and live with Uncle David, and I—I promised him. Mind, girls, I don't agree with him, but I promised him; I must and I will obey him, for I love him better than all the rest of the world!"

"Well?" exclaimed Kitty, "after that, Sybil, I have only one thing to say, and that is, I'm thankful on my own account!"

"What do you mean, Kitty?"

"That I've not been blessed with a Mark to obey. Come along, Betty, there's no use in our wasting words here. I am sorry for you, Sybil; I would not be in your shoes for a good deal."

At a later hour that same morning, Sybil, with red rings round her eyes, wrote to Mr. David Ross, acknowledging his cheque, and naming the day and hour when she would arrive at Shortlands. When she had finished the first letter she wrote a second. The second was to Mark. In this she gave him her new address, for she was to go to Shortlands in a couple of days' time. In the second letter, too, she was very careful to suppress all her real feeling. She did not allow a murmuring word to escape her, and took infinite pains to make the dreary future which lay at her door appear as bright as possible to the man she loved.

In a short postscript she did, however, allow her suffering little heart to give utterance to one wail:

"Oh, Mark! write to me as often as ever you can," said this simple postscript.

Danby got this letter as usual at breakfast-time. He slipped it into his pocket unopened, and read it afterwards at his leisure. He thought the letter dull, not to say stupid: Sybil's sweet self did not rise before him in a series of little pictures as he read. He wondered why the letter lacked freshness; he tried reading it over twice, and the second time he yawned as he perused it.

At this very moment poor Sybil's numerous small possessions were being packed away in one or two large trunks, which were to accompany her to Shortlands. The next morning, early, the other sisters in a body went with her to the station, where they found a dull old lady who did not object to being the pretty girl's escort for most of the journey. There were some kisses exchanged, and some very hard squeezes of the hand, and then the train slowly puffed out of the great station, and the three girls who were to conduct Miss Power's boarding-house in Rosemary Gardens went slowly home. They felt very subdued and sad without little Nineteen-year-old, and even Kitty could not be flippant for an hour or two. In the course of the morning, however, she was seen to hug herself ecstatically more than once.

"Oh, thank goodness, I'm not engaged," she said. The last time she made this remark she was in the linen-room counting the new pillow-cases, and Miss Power happened to be not far away.

"Come here, Katharine, and let me kiss you," said the old lady. "Them's my sentiments. But all the same, my love, I expect you will sing another song before the year is out. I never met the girl yet who did not want to be wooed and married, and a'——."

"This girl is an exception," said Kitty. "This girl has Sybil as a warning."

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

SYBIL had to change trains at York. She waited there for half-an-hour, and then travelled by a very slow local train to a small station about three miles away from Shortlands. She was the only passenger who alighted at this station. A girl in a brown holland dress was walking slowly up and down on the platform when the train crept into view. She was a slightly-made girl, with light-brown hair, and light-grey eyes. Her features were thin and sharp, her face pale. On her head she wore a brown hat, trimmed simply with a band of its own colour. A more quiet, expressionless little figure could scarcely be imagined.

Sybil opened the door of her second-class carriage, sprang lightly to the ground, and ran to meet her.

"You are my cousin, Muriel?" she said.

"Yes: had you not better see about your luggage? The train will not stay here a moment."

"Oh, good gracious!" replied Sybil, "and I have left no end of things in the carriage."

Miss Ross flew back again like lightning; she was all animation and brightness and colour beside the other girl in her drab clothes.

"Come and help me to get my things out," said Sybil.

Muriel stood on the platform. Sybil mounted into the carriage in which she had travelled, and began pulling railway-rugs, a luncheon-basket, a travelling bag, and parcel of umbrellas and parasols, along with sundry books and newspapers out of the wire cage which ran along the top of the compartment. These she tossed into Muriel's arms, and jumped out herself just as the train began to move.

"Is there no porter about?" she asked.

"Oh, yes, old Williams. He is seeing about your luggage. Have you many boxes? What a lot of loose things you have travelled with!"

"Do you call those many?" asked Sybil. "I wish you could see Kitty when she is on a journey!"

Muriel made no response whatever to this. She turned, so that her companion could see her in profile (Muriel's profile was even less attractive than her full face), and waited, until Williams, the old porter appeared, pushing Sybil's trunks before him on a barrow.

Williams panted as he walked, and Muriel went gravely up to him, and began an earnest colloquy.

Sybil stood a few paces behind, holding all her loose possessions.

"Muriel has never said she is glad to see me; she has not even said, 'How do you do?'" she murmured. Sybil bit her lips and tried to keep the tears back. In a moment Muriel returned.

"I am sorry," she said, in her grave, thin, uninteresting voice, "but it will be impossible to have your trunks conveyed to Shortlands to-day."

"But I really must have some clothes," began Sybil, aghast.

"I am sorry," repeated Muriel; "but your trunks are so unusually large that they cannot go on the roof of the carriage, even though mother did send the brougham on purpose. The carrier must bring your trunks. There is no other method."

"Well, can he bring them to-day?"

"I don't think so, but I can inquire."

Muriel returned to consult with old Williams; she came back in a moment.

"Williams says that Dawson the carrier only calls here once a week; his day is Friday. He will bring your trunks to Shortlands on Friday. His charge will be half-a-crown, but you can pay on delivery. I am sorry, but there is no help for it. Will you come now? I must not keep the horse waiting any longer."

Sybil felt herself growing very angry.

"This is Wednesday," she said, "and I am to do without any of my property until Friday evening?"

"I did not say 'evening'—the carrier may be able to bring your trunks in the afternoon."

"Afternoon, or evening, what does it signify? Am I to do without even a pair of slippers to put on until whenever the carrier arrives? You must be reasonable, Muriel, and, if my trunks cannot possibly be conveyed to Shortlands sooner than Friday, you must at least allow me to open one of them, and take out a few of the necessary articles I shall require."

Muriel looked dubious over this. Opening trunks at a railway-station was not in her experience of life. She was a girl who was not fond of new sensations; she demurred a little, but in the end consented to accompany her cousin into a kind of shed, where the trunks were deposited by Williams, who stood by without offering any assistance while Sybil unlocked one, and took out in a hurry those clothes she could

"MARK GOT UP NOW, AND ABSOLUTELY TURNED HIS BACK" (*p.* 194).

least well do without. Muriel also stood by without helping.

"Will you follow me to the carriage now?" she said in her even tone when Sybil had supplied herself sufficiently.

As they stepped into the comfortable, well-appointed brougham, Muriel touched Sybil on her knee.

"You had better give Williams a shilling," she said. "He has taken a good deal of trouble."

"In what way, I wonder," thought Sybil to herself; but she dropped the coin into the old man's horny palm without a protest.

The drive to Shortlands was up one dusty hill and down another. A high wind was blowing, and the dust penetrated through the crevices of the closed brougham. It was hot and close inside, and the choking dust made Sybil sneeze once or twice.

"Don't you think we might have one of the windows opened a tiny way?" she ventured at last to expostulate.

"I am sorry to disoblige you," answered Muriel, "but mother never likes me to sit in a draught. I am not strong."

Sybil leant wearily back against the cushions.

"Muriel," she said suddenly, when the dust and the heat and the stuffiness had become unendurable, "aren't you going to ask me any questions at all?"

"Well," answered Muriel, calmly, "I don't know that I want to begin just now."

"Why?" asked Sybil, in surprise.

"You are going to stay a long time with us—to live with us. There will be heaps of time to ask you questions."

"How calm you are!" said Sybil. She longed to add, "How cold, how horrid, how maddening!" but she refrained.

"May I ask you questions instead?" she asked.

"If you like."

"What do you do with yourself all day at Shortlands?"

"What do I do with myself all day?" repeated Muriel, slowly. "It would take me a long time to answer that question, Sybil. I do so many things."

"Yes, yes—well, when you want to amuse yourself, I mean. You give up some part of the day to amusement, don't you?"

"A little time, now and then, perhaps."

"What do you do in the little time?"

"If it is wet, I sit in the drawing-room, and read aloud to mother. I am reading 'Alison's History of Europe' to her now. Do you know it? It is in twenty volumes!"

"Good gracious! no, I don't know it."

"I don't think mother will like to hear you say 'Good gracious,' Sybil. It is kinder, perhaps, for me to tell you at once that mother has the greatest horror of all exaggerated expressions. She has taught me never to say a single word more than I mean."

"I am sure you never do that," said Sybil, with fervour.

"No; I hope I never do. Shall I tell you more about my amusements? On fine days I botanise with mother; or if she is occupied with her Waif and Stray Society I dig in my own little garden. Are you fond of gardening, Sybil? Don't you think it is interesting to watch the growth of Nature, even in the smallest plants?"

"Look here," said Sybil, ungratefully, "I'm a town girl, and I don't know anything about country pursuits. I don't want to garden, nor to study botany, nor to read history aloud to your mother. Please let me walk up this hill, Muriel, for, if I don't get some air immediately, I shall suffocate."

Muriel glanced round at Sybil.

"You look hot," she said; "that is because you have excited yourself. There was no occasion. I don't want you to join in my pleasures; I never expected you to like them."

Then she pulled the check-string. The carriage drew up, and Sybil got out. She almost ran up the hill, she walked so fast. She got the air into her lungs again, and a gleam of hope stole back into her heart. At the top of the hill was a stile, and at the other side of the stile a narrow, golden yellow path wandered in a diverse ribbon fashion across a moor; the moor was covered with bracken, and the bracken was showing brown and yellow in patches.

Sybil's eyes began to dance at this sight, and her heart to move more quickly in her breast.

When the brougham appeared on the summit of the hill she ran up to the carriage window.

"Muriel, where does that lovely path lead?"

"What lovely path?"

"That one at the other end of the stile."

"It leads home—to Shortlands."

"Then I will go that way. Good-bye. Oh, someone is sure to tell me how to get to your place."

Before Muriel could expostulate, Sybil was over the stile, and flying down the path, rendered yellow by the evening sun.

Nearly an hour later a dishevelled-looking, untidy girl was ushered by the grey-haired old butler into the drawing-room at Shortlands.

"Oh, I am so sorry, Uncle David," began Sybil at once. She walked up to her uncle, who was standing on the hearth-rug. "I lost my way on the moor, but it *was* so exquisite, and I found these flowers. May I give them to you, Aunt Matilda?"

Mrs. Ross was a very large edition of Muriel; Mrs. Ross was Muriel stout and middle-aged. She looked at her husband, took no notice whatever of the flowers, but walked two or three steps down the room to meet Sybil.

"How do you do, Sybil?" she said; and she pushed her pale cheek forward for Sybil to kiss.

"How do you do, Sybil?" said her uncle.

Sybil looked round for Muriel. She was standing at a little distance, pouring weak tea into cups of rare old china.

"Sybil," said her uncle, "we will say nothing about it on this occasion, but it is against the rules for any girl who happens to live at Shortlands to venture on the moors alone. You will remember that in future, my dear. Matilda, shall I ring the bell?"

"Thank you, David," responded Mrs. Ross.

The bell was rung, and in a moment the old servant appeared.

"Jonathan," said Mrs. Ross, "take that rubbish out of the room."

The rubbish consisted of Sybil's flowers.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

SHORTLANDS was a large, square-built house; it had a wide entrance hall in the middle, and square sitting-rooms to right and left. There were the drawing-room and the morning-room at one side of the hall, and at the other the dining-room and the library. The kitchens were underneath in a great, well-drained basement. Mr. and Mrs. Ross thought basements were wholesome, and, notwithstanding the abundance of ground-room, preferred having their dinners cooked under their sitting-rooms. Upstairs on the first floor were large, solidly-furnished bedrooms. On the second floor were more bedrooms, less-solidly furnished, and above these were the servants' comfortable attics.

There was not an unexpected angle or corner anywhere at Shortlands. The house was built for utility, for service, for a calm and well-ordered life. In this house Muriel had been born. She had been brought up in it, educated, partly by her mother, and partly by a governess of the old school. Muriel had responded to the pains bestowed upon her in the kindest way; she had been brought up in grooves, and her whole nature now fitted nicely into the space allotted to it. There was no room for outward growth in Muriel's grooves; but then she did not wish to grow.

Sybil thought that she had never seen anyone quite so strange and incomprehensible as Muriel. What Muriel thought about her London cousin was not revealed.

After tea the girls went upstairs to the second floor, where Muriel showed Sybil the neat, square bedroom which she was to occupy; the bedroom was clothed in drab. In itself it was essentially ugly, but its windows commanded a view of the moor across which Sybil had walked.

The sun was more slanting now than it had been an hour and a half ago, and there was a greater glory of colour lying across the bracken and the heather. Sybil's spirits had been down to zero, until Muriel opened the door of her bedroom, and revealed this view to her through its windows. The colour and brightness rushed back to her eyes at the sight; her cheeks became rosy red; she clasped her cousin's hand.

"Oh, Muriel, Muriel, how exquisite! Do come and look!" she exclaimed.

"At what?" asked Muriel.

"The view, the sunset—the colour on the moor! Do, do come and look at it."

"You are from London," said Muriel, "and father tells me you never see sunsets there. You will be accustomed to this in a few days."

She twisted her hands out of Sybil's, and stood on the hearth-rug, looking round the chamber. Sybil perched herself on the window-ledge, pressed her face against the glass and gazed out. After a time she gave utterance to a deep, long, satisfied sigh, sprang lightly to the ground, and, running impulsively up to Muriel, kissed her.

"Thank you for giving me this lovely, lovely room," she said.

"I wish you would not exaggerate," replied Muriel. "This is not at all a lovely room: it is plain and neat. Mother says a bedroom should never be more. Please just listen to me a moment, Sybil, while I tell you about the arrangements. When your trunks come you can hang your dresses in this wardrobe; your linen and smaller articles will go into that chest of drawers in the corner. This deep cupboard, you see, holds your bath, and there is a shelf above for your boots and shoes. Mother will like us both to keep our rooms very tidy. Now I think I will leave you for a little; we dine at seven o'clock. The dressing bell rings at twenty minutes to seven, and we assemble in the drawing-room at five minutes to the dinner hour. Good-bye for the present, Sybil."

Muriel walked out of the room without waiting for her cousin's response. The moment she had gone Sybil rushed to the door to lock it: there was no key in the lock. She looked around her half desperately. At that moment she would have thought very little of dragging the chest of drawers across the room to barricade the door, and so secure her privacy. She refrained from doing this; but she did not refrain from dancing madly on the floor, and pushing her hands through her hair, and even pinching one hand with the other.

"Prison would be better!" she said at last. "Oh, Mark, Mark! what am I not giving up for your sake?"

The thought of Mark soothed and even calmed her. Sybil was the sort of girl who would sacrifice much for the man she loved—who would glory in her sacrifice, and, up to a certain point, enjoy it. She ceased to dance on the floor, and, going to the window, opened it wide, and leant half out.

The breeze which had blown dust into her eyes as she and Muriel drove together in the brougham now brought strength and refreshment. The first gong sounded; she put in her head, and turned to the dressing-table to make what toilet she could. She was determined now to be brave, to make the best of things, and to look as pretty as she possibly could for Mark's sake. To-night she had no dinner dress to put on, but she could make her wavy golden hair as fluffy, as soft, as picturesque as hair could look. Sybil had never descended to the adoption of an absolute fringe, but she had short locks curling here and there on her temples, and wavy tendrils of those bright threads of gold would get loose from their pins, and fall about her neck, and nestle round her ears.

Kitty and Betty thought nothing more beautiful than Sybil's head when she had tossed it into order, as they expressed it, with a pitchfork.

To-night the tossed condition had even a daring

"GOOD-BYE" (*p.* 198).

appearance: it seemed so out of keeping with the neatness and composure of Shortlands.

But Sybil had no adornment for this first dinner but her bright hair, and she was determined to make the most of it.

When the second gong sounded Muriel knocked at her door; Muriel's little head looked as if it were clothed in satin. Her light-brown thick hair was parted in front, and plaited in a tight mass round the back of her head. Not a hair dared to displace itself; all was neatness and order. Muriel wore a brown check silk dress; beside Sybil she looked the most modest of maidens.

The girls went down to the drawing-room without uttering a word. When they entered the room they found Mr. and Mrs. Ross standing together on the hearth-rug talking to a young clergyman, who was presently introduced to Sybil as Mr. Purcell.

"Mr. Purcell is our new curate," whispered Muriel; "you will hear him preach on Sunday. Mother takes the greatest comfort in his ministrations."

It was Sybil's turn now to make no response. She went over to the window, and gave a faint, impatient sigh when she discovered that no window in the drawing-room looked over the moor. Dinner was announced, and the family migrated into the dining-room. Sybil found herself opposite to Muriel and Mr. Purcell. She could not help observing that Mr. Purcell's dull grey eyes travelled very often in her direction during the meal. They seemed, as far as she could gather, to wear an approving and even delighted expression. This was some sort of comfort, for Mr. and Mrs. Ross also looked at her constantly, and their eyes expressed the reverse of approval or delight.

Mr. Ross, while he ate his soup, kept his large, prominent eyes so determinately fixed upon the top of her head that she began to wonder if a hair-pin had suddenly taken upon itself to stand up straight there.

After dinner Mrs. Ross called Sybil to her side.

"My dear," she said, "I will ask Muriel to bring you a little bandoline to-night, and will request you to brush some on your hair. Neither your uncle nor I can permit you to sit at table again the show you were this evening."

"Show?" said Sybil. "But my hair is naturally frizzy, and no girls have smooth heads now."

"Excuse me; modest girls will always have smooth heads. We won't discuss this matter any further. Muriel, you might get the 'History' and 'Smith's Commentary' ready. Mr. Purcell has promised to expound the early history of the first century with the aid of the commentary this evening. Have you any needle-work to do, Sybil?"

"No," said Sybil; "I don't work much, and anyhow my trunks are at the station."

"Then, my dear, you can help me this evening. Muriel, fetch the Waif and Stray basket."

Half an hour later Sybil found herself seated at a good distance from the lamp, struggling over the intricacies of an old woman's bed-gown. Mrs. Ross was knitting something hideous, which she called a "Hug-me-tight." Muriel's fair, shining head was bent over a cambric handkerchief which she was embroidering; Mr. Ross sat in his arm-chair and went to sleep, and Mr. Purcell, with the lamp light revealing all the plainness of his features, read history aloud. He read

in a very correct monotonous voice, rounding his periods nicely, and availing himself of every stop. As he read, Sybil threw down her bedgown and watched him.

"How comical it all is!" she said to herself, and her eyes grew brimful of mirth and her lips quivered.

The electricity of her gaze communicated itself to the reader. His voice faltered; he raised his eyes, glanced at her—a warm glow of pleasure filled his breast, and a pink blush overspread his features.

Sybil resumed her needlework, and for the first time Mr. Purcell found Shortlands interesting.

END OF CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

HOW TO LOOK NICE.

BY PHYLLIS BROWNE. IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

IN the pages of a magazine which appeared nearly two hundred years ago—*The Tatler*—there is an account of a conversation between Jenny Distaff of pleasant memory, and her brother, Mr. Bickerstaff, this being the *nom de plume* of our great English humourist, Richard Steele. Jenny, it will be remembered, had been married a few weeks previously to Tranquillus, and she came to her brother to tell him that she was perfectly happy, and that she had everything she could wish for. But she added, "I have one fear hanging over me. I am afraid that I shall not always make the same amiable appearance in the eyes of my husband that I do at present. You, brother Bickerstaff, have the reputation of a conjurer, and if you have one secret in your art to make your sister always beautiful, I should be happier than if I were mistress of all the worlds you have shown me on a starry night."

It is easy to believe that both before and since Jenny Distaff's time, a good many women have felt as she did, though not every one would be willing to confess as much. Deep down in the heart of every woman is an admiration for beauty, and a longing to possess it. Nor can we wonder at this when we remember what a power beauty has. "Beauty is a key which opens all doors," says the proverb. It wins love, it secures kindly judgment for its possessor; crooked paths grow straight, and rough places plain when Beauty walks thereon. Individuals who possess good looks have a great advantage over those who are plain and uninteresting. They produce a good impression without effort; strangers are kindly disposed towards them; the mistakes which they commit are excused and passed over lightly because they themselves are charming; they make their way easily. It is quite possible that the impression thus produced is not very lasting; that those who know Beauty the best and dwell under the same roof with her care the least for her good looks, and appear sometimes to be almost unconscious of them, valuing the intelligence and tenderness which they have gradually discovered in a plain face more than Beauty's well-cut features or pretty complexion. Still, at the beginning, Beauty has the best of it; she makes a good start, whereas plain-looking women start handicapped; and it is often the start which tells. Beauty begins the race with so many points in her favour, that there is no wonder that plain-featured persons are sometimes a little envious of her.

It is a sign of the power of beauty that so many plain-looking persons try to *make* themselves beautiful. Quacks and impostors have in all ages found dupes in weak-minded individuals of unattractive appearance; and cosmetics and lotions have been bought and are still bought in quantities, in the hope of retarding the decay of beauty in those who have it, or of producing it in those who have it not. The worst of attempts of this sort is that they do more harm than good. For a very short time they may make a woman look a little more attractive, but they mean ruin to comeliness in the long run. An individual who has formed a habit of painting her cheeks or "making up" her complexion, for example, is certain before very long to injure the delicate texture of the skin. Years before she is actually old, she will look wizened and haggard, when exposed to the full light of day. Even by gaslight, when she fondly imagines that she looks so beautiful, the efforts which she has made to enhance her charms are abundantly apparent to the spectator; and men and women turn away from her with a smile or a sneer according to their disposition. She has failed because she has worked on the wrong lines.

Are we then to do nothing to improve our appearance? it may be asked. Must those of us who are naturally plain-looking, inelegant, and unattractive quietly accept the misfortune, and take no steps to remedy the evil? By no means. On the contrary we *ought* to make the best of ourselves. We have no right to be a spot of ugliness on the surface of the beautiful earth, when, by taking a little pains and exercising a little care, we might so easily be not beautiful perhaps, but at least an agreeable object for the eye to rest on. "To please" is a positive duty devolving upon both men and women, and people who neglect it add to the sum of discontent in the world, which is a most mistaken piece of conduct. Besides one advantage connected with taking the right methods of trying to look our best is that having done what we can, we can dismiss the subject of our

own appearance from our minds, and need think no more about it, which is a great comfort. People who follow fashion have to be always changing, they have never done, but the best methods of preserving and attaining beauty are always the same ; they never become obsolete. Once having become accustomed to them, we may follow them with advantage all our lives.

In talking thus of aids to beauty, we are not of course thinking of the best sort of loveliness. When Jenny Distaff asked her brother to tell her the secret of being always beautiful, he replied as follows : "Without having recourse to magic, Jenny, I will give you one plain rule that will not fail of making you always amiable to a man who is of so equal and reasonable a temper as Tranquillus. Endeavour to please, and you must please ; be always in the same disposition as you are when you ask for this secret, and you may take my word, you will never want it. An inviolable fidelity, good-humour, and complacency of temper outlive all the charms of a fine face, and make the decay of it invisible." In the same spirit, Mr. Ruskin says, "Care, anxiety, suspicion, bad temper all leave their wrinkles, and we are doing a good deal towards making ourselves look old and ugly when we give way to worry and fretfulness."

These writers were speaking of the most perfect loveliness which the human countenance can exhibit, but it must be understood that it is not of beauty of this kind that we are now thinking. Rather we want to discover whether there are not certain physical aids to beauty which may be legitimately taken without harm being done and without foolish wrong-doing. The result of our inquiry is that decidedly such aids are available to us. In order to arrive at these we must take our points of beauty one by one, and also our defects one by one, and see how each individual can simply make the best and most of the charms with which Nature has endowed her, and also cure or modify the blemishes which now spoil her ; there are few of us so poor in this way that we have not some charms, and it is as much a mistake when we fail to cultivate these as it is when we fail to cultivate mental gifts.

The figure. The first point which strikes us when we meet a stranger is the figure, that is, the general appearance, the carriage, the grace or elegance or awkwardness of the *tout ensemble.* Yet is it not the case that individuals fail to make the best of themselves in this direction, by not holding themselves properly ? They stand anyhow, as the saying is, let themselves droop, and when tired loll in an easy chair. The consequence is that they lose all spring, nerve, and command of their own muscles. If for six months they would persevere in keeping upright, throwing the head well back, and holding the shoulders down, putting their weight on the small of the back, and keeping the line from the bust down as a matter of habit, they would look quite different at the end of the time. It is quite as important, however, to sit correctly as it is to stand correctly. To accustom one's self to sit lazily is to ruin one's chances of elegance, especially in middle life.

Tight-lacing has a great deal to do with the want of grace among women. There can be no grace where there is not freedom and suppleness. Our bones and muscles are given to us to support the weight of our bodies. When, instead of using them, we employ artificial aids, our muscles deteriorate, and lose their power. Tight-lacing undoubtedly makes young people look trim and slender, but the effect is too often ill-health and diminished vitality in middle age. The question of the propriety or impropriety of tight-lacing is, however, a large subject, and as it is not likely that anyone who practised tight-lacing would condescend to employ the simple aids to beauty recommended here, it is not perhaps worth while now to do more than merely refer to the matter.

The practice of gymnastics does much to give elegance to the carriage. Also gymnastic exercises if continued reasonably during the period of growth—the individual meantime being surrounded by sanitary conditions, and supplied with good wholesome food and fresh air—tend to assist growth. "Who by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature ?" it may be asked. When young people have done growing, certainly nothing can be done ; but before this point is reached a good deal may be done, not perhaps to augment the possible height, but to prevent stunted growth. Colliers, miners, and people who work underground away from the sweet influences of sunshine and fresh air are generally much shorter than are individuals who enjoy those influences.

Apart from gymnastics, an easy way of helping young people to carry themselves well is to accustom them every day before and after each meal to stand with their backs to the door for one minute in such a position that the elbows, the head, the shoulders, the palms of the hands, the back, and the heels shall touch the door. This simple expedient will put the body exactly in the right position, and if a little pains be taken to maintain it as long as possible, correct standing would soon become habitual.

Elegance and grace of figure are often destroyed either by over-stoutness or over-thinness. It is to be remembered however that, excepting with people past middle life—at which period the contour of the figure is more or less fixed—the conditions referred to are very dependent on diet. It is unfortunate that stout people almost always have a liking for foods that make fat, while thin people dislike foods that make fat. If these individuals would exercise a little strength of will, and take in great moderation certain foods, their figures would after a few months be quite different. The foods of which corpulent persons ought to beware and which thin people ought to take are potatoes, starchy foods, sweets, cream, milk, thick soups and sauces, cocoa, chocolate, peas, parsnips, carrots, beets, and such-like foods. The foods which stout people may have with safety are lean meat, poultry, game, eggs (in all forms), flat fish, green vegetables, succulent fruits, tea and coffee. Stout people ought to take plenty of exercise, sleep all they can and avoid worry. They should eat slowly, and masticate their

food. In many cases they would find it an advantage to drink as much as they required an hour before meals, but to avoid drinking when they are eating. A tumblerful of hot water taken as a "nightcap" will be of great value to them.

One word of caution needs to be said to individuals who intend to attempt to lessen or increase their weight and size by living upon certain foods and avoiding other foods. Great discretion needs to be exercised when making experiments of this sort, or health may be weakened, and the remedy may be worse than the disease. A physician of experience who was consulted on this subject not long ago expressed the following opinion. "Without a doubt it is possible under normal conditions to increase or reduce weight by dieting, although it is much easier to make stout people thin than it is to make thin people stout. But it is always wise to avoid sudden changes. Thus potatoes and sweets are the chief causes of corpulence. But individuals who are corpulent generally eat liberally of both, and not only would they find it a great trial to give these foods up entirely, but they would not be so well without them. In attempting to lessen stoutness, therefore, it is best not to make a sudden change of any sort, but to be more moderate in all things. The food which goes to make fat is the food which is not required to sustain the system, and if we all took only as much food as we required we should be less likely to increase in size. This moderation being secured, it would be more beneficial to take a little of all sorts of food than it would be to live entirely on one sort, and to discard other varieties altogether."

(*To be continued.*)

MY CONJURING TRICKS.

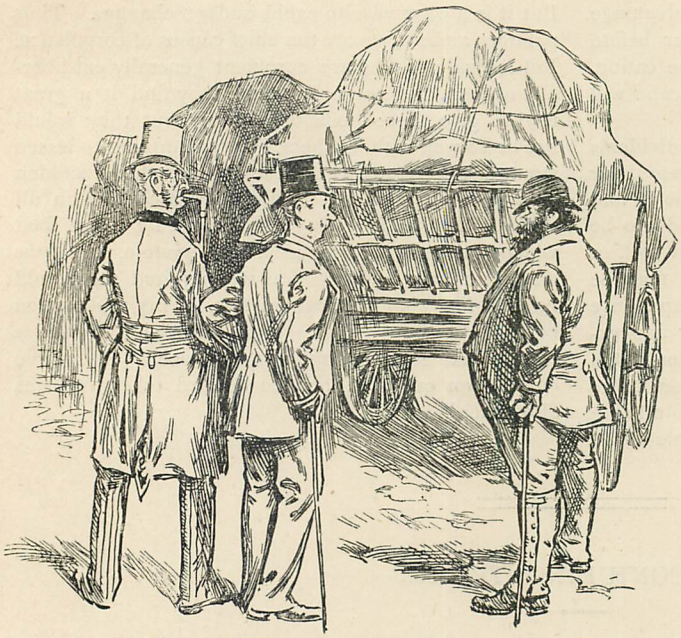
something peculiarly fascinating about conjuring, especially to youthful minds. To see a man dressed in ordinary evening costume, with apparently no possibility of his being able to conceal anything on his person without detection, produce, one after the other, the most impossible and extraordinary articles with the greatest ease and *nonchalance*, always aroused in me the deepest interest and curiosity. I determined to find out "how it was done." With this view I set to work to find a high-class and respectable performer who would give me lessons at a reasonable rate. I at last discovered one who for a fee of five guineas undertook to teach me sufficient tricks to entertain an audience for an hour. Either my professor was such a clever teacher, or I was such an apt pupil, that I actually attained to this, the pinnacle of my ambition. I won't say that no *contretemps* ever occurred, but as I always confined my performance to an audience of children, any little mishaps were, as a rule, easily explained away. Sometimes, however, things *would* go wrong, and it certainly was rather distressing when you asked the crowd of little upturned faces in front of you whether any of them had an egg about them, as you rather wanted one to make an omelette with in the clergyman's hat, if one of them, with eyes more observant than the others, asked "Why for didn't you use the one you had in your hand then?"

Let us draw a veil over such painful scenes and proceed with our history.

On one occasion I was asked whether I would perform a few tricks in a drawing-room after dinner before an audience of "grown-ups." Whether it was because it was "after dinner," or not, I do not know, but at any rate in a weak moment I consented. To that moment's hesitation I date all my subsequent misfortunes. Had I had strength of mind to resist, the occasion would never have arisen, and this story would never have been written. I performed one or two simple tricks, and I think may fairly say with neatness and dexterity. The ladies were astonished! They could not understand how their frizzled heads contained numerous coins, how the air was full of them, and how easily eggs could be laid without the necessity of hens being present. Apparently this simple system of egg-production would do away with the nuisance of fowl-keeping in London: no more annoying of your next-door neighbour, no more rousing up of yourself unduly early, by chanticleer proclaiming proudly the dawn of day. A new era was to be inaugurated—a happier state of things was to be introduced—when new-laid eggs were quietly and unobtrusively to lay themselves on every well-ordered breakfast table. Possibly, too, the system might be further extended, till at length the object of ambition of some of our more advanced politicians and fiscal reformers might be attained. Just a wave of the hand on entering the breakfast chamber, and, lo! a free breakfast table! But you must know how to do it. When you have once mastered the secret, it is quite easy. Filled with these inspiring thoughts, an eminent politician who was present advanced towards me and thus addressed me—

"I had no idea you were such an excellent conjurer. I think now that I can do you a good turn."

I smile loftily.



"HE CONDUCTED US TO TWO LARGE FARM CARTS."

Eminent politician continues: "I happen to live in the same village as a butcher."

"Really!" I say. "How very extraordinary!"

Eminent politician, undismayed: "You know that the Maharajah Dhulah Singh lived near here? If you don't you ought to. Well, when all his things were sold up, he had a most extraordinary collection of conjuring appliances, which were bought for a mere song by my butcher. He doesn't know what to do with them, and I think they might be useful to you."

I express my obligation to the E. P., and promise to go and have a look at them.

This I accordingly did the next morning. The butcher was out, but his good lady obligingly showed me the tricks. There were two large boxes full of the most extraordinary looking articles of every kind and sort. In addition, I was told, there were many more stowed away up above. Before I left I arranged that the things were to be sent into Bury market for my inspection at an early date. Accordingly, on the day mentioned, I attended at the market, accompanied by the member for the borough, and waited on the conjuring butcher. After a brief discussion on meat and an exhibition of sucking-pigs, he conducted us to two large farm carts standing in the market place. They were covered with tarpaulins, and those tarpaulins covered the much-coveted tricks. After a little haggling, I became the proud and happy owner of two waggon-loads of tricks for three golden sovereigns.

My next difficulty was to get them up to London. The butcher, however, proved capable of overcoming all obstacles. Regardless of cost (as I had to pay for them), he purchased crates and packing cases, and packed everything up in meat cloths. I then went up to London, feeling that either I had done a very good thing or a very bad one—I couldn't quite make out which. I pictured myself being requisitioned everywhere in London. No party would be complete without me. What a sensation I should make! What marvels and mysteries I should accomplish! And then a sort of shudder came across me as I thought with dismay of the train of growlers that would be required to carry two waggon-loads of conjuring tricks to the scene of the performance. Would it be cheaper to take a season ticket for a delivery van? And then I thought of my wife's face when I told her that two waggon-loads of mirth-provoking mysteries were coming to stay with her? Were they likely to provoke her mirth? I felt a little uncertain. And then there was the housekeeper! She would think I had gone mad. And the footman, when he opened the front door to two waggon-loads of conjuring wonders and had—Heaven knows what—to pay for their carriage! By the time we had got to Cambridge I felt decidedly uncomfortable, and before I arrived home I felt I had made an abject fool of myself. However, I put the best face on the matter, and gently broke to my wife that I had bought a few—just a few—small conjuring tricks. Oh, no! there was no need for any anxiety, not at all; and there were no animals among them—nothing objectionable at all.

A day or two passed, and I heard nothing of my tricks, and I really began to think that it was all a horrible dream. But I was soon to be rudely awakened from this idea. I was sauntering down to luncheon one morning, and in turning the corner into my street became suddenly conscious that something unusual had happened. As I approached, it seemed to be my house that was the centre of attraction. Was it—could it be a fire? No, not enough excitement for that. The policeman and messenger were talking and laughing together as I passed, looking hugely amused at something, and as if I were partly connected with that something. There were of course several stray street boys loafing about, and an enormous covered cart on the other side of the street, with a tired looking horse with his head in his nose-bag. As I took out my latchkey I noticed an unusual litter on the doorsteps, and as I opened the door a most unusual and extraordinary odour assailed my nostrils. It was a happy blending of rats and mice and mouldy straw and damp meat cloths. They had come—they had arrived, with seventeen and something to pay. They filled up the passage, they blocked up the hall, they were half-way up the staircase on both sides, they had invaded my study and overflowed into the dining-room. Never shall I forget that scene! They were certainly high and not clean. At the top of the steps stood my wife, waiting to receive me, shall I say smiling a welcome? She

was evidently wanting me, evidently glad to see me.

I fear that luncheon was not a pleasant meal. I felt somehow moody and depressed. But after luncheon I was a man of action. I summoned the footman, and ordered him immediately to open all the windows, and then to colleet all the meat cloths as quickly as possible, put them in a bundle, and return them to their owner, whose nose must have been sadly missing them. Then, with our coats off, and soap and water and dusters, we set to work to clean the tricks and stow them away. The house was literally inundated with them. After some hours' labour we got them fairly clean and stowed away in different places.

The next thing was evidently to get an expert's opinion of them. I could make neither head nor tail of them myself, and till I could do so it was evident they were useless to me. Accordingly I sent off to my late instructor, requesting him to inspect and report on them. For various reasons it was some days before he could come, so meanwhile, if anyone came to luncheon or called, we always conducted them upstairs to the home of mystery. At length the great man arrived. With inward trepidation I followed him upstairs and awaited his verdict. He rapidly cast his eye over them and grunted. He was evidently pleased with them. I had really got hold of a good thing this time.

"Well, Professor?" I said, cheerfully.

His summing-up was brief and to the point: "They're no use to you, sir; they're only fit for a travelling platform conjurer."

I grew pale and faltered, but only for a moment. Then I drew myself up and said firmly, "Professor, you will oblige me by making arrangements for the instant removal of these accursed tricks."

Forthwith the professor, who was a very worthy man, stepped downstairs with me and agreed to take them off my hands at once. In addition he was to pay £4 for them, give me as many lessons as I wanted, and make me a special conjuring table. Well, I thought, I haven't made such a very bad bargain after all.

I thought our interview was over, but the professor seemed in no hurry to go. At last he cleared his throat, and thus delivered himself—"About the money, sir?"

"Oh, there's no hurry about that," I said. "Whenever convenient to you."

"Thank you, sir," he said heartily, and seemed relieved.

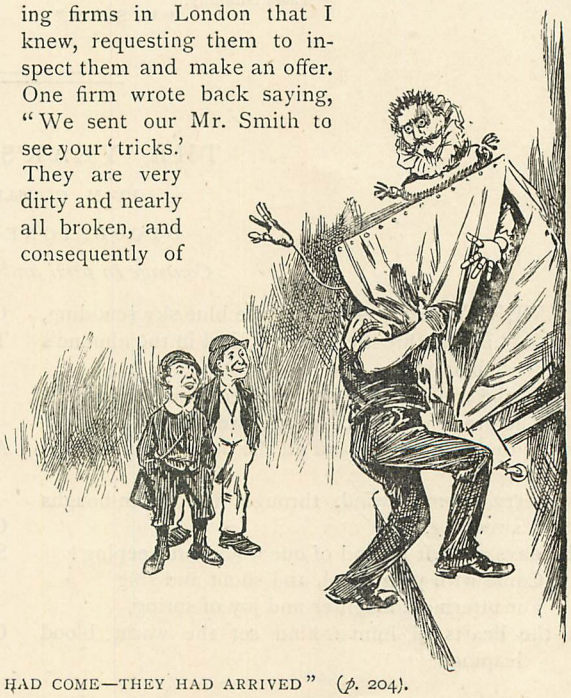
The next morning an enormous waggon arrived with two strong men. The policeman and messenger got together again, the urchins congregated on the doorstep, deriding the strong men as they carried unearthly looking objects out of the front door. I seized a convenient opportunity and slunk out. When I returned, they had all gone, thank Heaven! The street had resumed its normal aspect. They had gone, and all would be well again. Ah, little did I know what was in store for me!

The days flew on; weeks passed and months passed; the old year had gone and the new one came, and no news of my tricks. At length I thought that really some considerable time had elapsed, and my professor might fairly be asked to perform *his* share of the bargain.

And now comes the melancholy part of my tale. I wrote to the good man, and said I did not want to press him, but supposed he recollected the terms of the compact. Days passed by, and no answer arrived. At last came a letter to say that my poor professor had fallen a victim to the influenza. I was sincerely sorry, for he wasn't a bad fellow at all, and I have pleasure in paying this tribute to his memory. But then followed words which sent a cold shudder right through me. The letter went on:—

"My poor brother has died very badly off. His widow is totally unable to carry out any arrangement with regard to the tricks. Therefore she begs you to *send for them at once*, as meanwhile she is paying rent for the warehouse in which they are. She further asks me to say she would be much obliged for £1 1cs. for expenses in connection with them."

This was awful! The prospect of having those horrible things in my possession was more than I could face. I wrote off instantly to say, "Get rid of them, but I cannot possibly take them back." The professor's brother declined to try and get rid of them, and said, "I must take them back." I positively declined to take them back, and said the brother or widow must get rid of them. I wrote to all the conjuring firms in London that I knew, requesting them to inspect them and make an offer. One firm wrote back saying, "We sent our Mr. Smith to see your 'tricks.' They are very dirty and nearly all broken, and consequently of



"THEY HAD COME—THEY HAD ARRIVED" (*p.* 204).

"A DUSTMAN CAME AND ASKED FOR A DONATION."

no use to us." In desperation I wrote one final letter, and got the following response :—

"398, BROWN STREET.

"DEAR SIR,—I have instructed for many years members of the Royal Family and nobility. I have zealously practised my profession for about fifty years. On receiving your note yesterday I went to see your tricks. There were a few very dirty broken remnants piled up anyhow in hampers and boxes, inches deep in dirt and dust. The tables were evidently good once. It was sad to see such a sight. The tricks are no use to me, but I will make you an offer of £1 10s. for them. Wire if you accept.

"Yours faithfully,

"W. SMILER."

I immediately answered this by saying I was confident the things were worth a great deal more, and could not think of letting them go at so much below their value. This was the answer :—

"398, BROWN STREET.

"SIR,—I will give you £2 10s. for your tricks, and not a penny more. In addition a choice of £1 worth of my beautiful new tricks. Anticipating your acceptance of my offer, I have been to Wardour Street to fetch them away. I met with fearful abuse from the widow. She abused you, too, out in the street. 'How came you ever to go to such a man? I cannot find words to express what I feel about him.' I had to go up a ladder into a roof after the tricks. I wish I'd never touched them. They are a nice dirty lot; my wife says she never saw a dirtier. I have been to a lot of expense over them. This is what they've cost me so far :—

	s.	d.
To four-wheel cab to Wardour Street and back twice ...	3	0
To poor little boy for bringing pail of water to clean dirty tricks with	0	3
To poor man for bringing tricks down steep staircase ...		
To two men with waggon and horse for removing tricks	3	6
To man's valuable time for cleaning dirty tricks	2	0
	8	9

I enclose two beautiful new catalogues of newest tricks, post free.

"Yours, etc.,

"W. SMILER."

I smiled considerably on reading this letter, and willingly consented to Mr. Smiler taking the tricks. That night I slept the sleep of the just. I was rid of my bugbear.

My tricks have returned to me no more. I now sleep peacefully at night. The combined odour of damp meat cloths and odorous rats and mice has gone. The street has resumed its wonted quiet, and I have ceased to be an object of wonderment and ridicule to the policeman and the messenger. In fact, I am now so much looked up to that a dustman came and asked for a donation for a beanfeast this morning!

GEORGE MANNERS.

THE YEAR'S JEWELS.

BY M. C. GILLINGTON.

BLOODSTONE: MARCH.

Courage in peril and firmness in love.

O MERRY, merry cloud o'er the blue sky scudding,
While the throstle's song is loud in the almond's budding!
In the winter's pale now the red blood reigns,
The green wood-mosses are sweet with rains,
And with daffodils a-crowd all the fields are flooding!

O merry, merry wind, through the larch-boughs sweeping,
The days are left behind of our woes and weeping!
Come with your carol, and shout and sing
For uttermost laughter and joy of spring,
In the hearts of human-kind set the warm blood leaping!

O merry, merry bird in the tossed trees singing,
The echo of your word sets the young leaves swinging!
In the burgeoned willows the red blood stirs,
There's a gleam of gold on the dark green furze,
And all the brooks have heard what the hours are bringing!

O merry, merry heart in the morn forth faring,
So blithesome as thou art, meet for deeds of daring!
No danger daunts thee, no peril gives pause
To thee, Knight-errant in Love's own cause,
On whose clear heights apart hangs a crown for thy wearing!

MORE ABOUT UNCLE JOHN'S CUCUMBER FRAMES.

A GARDEN STORY.

DITH MERRIMAN had been downstairs now some two or three weeks, and an unnaturally warm day in March had found her even strolling round the garden, accompanied, of course, by her faithful nurse and counsellor, Amy Singleton. One more turn in the path, and the two found themselves lingering by the newly-erected hot-beds, known now only too well to both of them as the site of the disaster; and, stealing a glance at the convalescent virago, Amy was not a little concerned to see that the poor scarred face was rapidly flushing up, and that the dancing and flashing eyes seemed indicative of a coming tempest. The memory of past pain, vexation at the recollection of pleasures and parties which others had enjoyed, but which she had been compelled to forego, the secret consciousness that it was her own fault, and that her own uncurbed temper had made her ridiculous in the eyes of everybody else, and certainly a deep-seated anxiety as to whether these dreadful scars were to be permanent or not—all were mortifying causes of irritation in Edith Merriman, which the quick-sighted Amy Singleton detected in an instant, and for a moment she regretted that her patient had come with her to the spot, but the next as quickly reflected that the irritation had been got over, and that future walks round the garden would probably be harmless. Not without their fruit, however, had the gentle words of persuasive kindness and the unselfish care of Amy Singleton passed away in the sick chamber of Edith Merriman. Feigning not to notice it, Amy, when quietly reading or talking to the prostrate girl, had sometimes thought she saw a hot tear roll from the great dark eyes that were fixed upon her, and so it came to pass now, in their walk round the garden, that almost before Amy could hit upon some diversion from the odious cucumber frame, Edith herself appeared to find that diversion in the very frame whose foundation had done her so much harm; and Amy, as she noticed the sudden but determined composure on the face of her friend, felt sure there had been a struggle, but that victory was won.

"How delicious that mignonette and those lilies of the valley look inside, Amy," said Edith, bending quickly over the glass as if to hide her face, and her somewhat trembling hand grasped almost with affectionate gratitude that of her companion.

"Mignonette and lilies of the valley in a cucumber frame," said Amy, wonderingly; "why, so there are. But I remember now Bailey always makes use of the frame in the spring for forcing on all manner of flowers, and now you have found out two of my pets. See, Edith," continued she, "as the young cucumber plants have only just lately been planted in the centre of the frame, there will be ample room for some time all round the sides for flower-pots and forcing until the cucumber plants want all the space."

A moment's pause while Bailey, in passing by, opened the frame a few minutes; both girls stood looking at the lilies, and drinking in their fragrance, when Amy quietly added, "Solomon in all his glory was not——tears, Edith, what is it, dear?"

"I don't think I'm quite strong yet, Amy, and perhaps I'm rather upset by the scene of my troubles, so we'll go into the house." Once in her room, and the long pent-up wish to show her gratitude to her fair nurse for all that had been done for her, found its vent only at first in incoherent words and sobs, but immediately afterwards, with heaving bosom and arms flung round her benefactor, she stammered out in monosyllables, "Dear Amy—you are—my *mignonette*—my little darling—my gentle lily of the valley—do show me how to be gentle and humble and loving like you!"

"Hush, dear!" replied Amy, trying to laugh as much as her tears of thankful delight would allow her; "you mustn't try to make me vain, you know, but when I can help you I will, dear: disease once known is half cured, and your tantrums are *more* than half cured, I am certain, and will soon vanish as fast as those scars are vanishing from your pretty face."

Nelly Singleton, somewhat inappropriately, burst into the room at this moment, just in time to witness the affectionate kiss of peace.

"Hulloa!" she exclaimed, "two roses kissing one another! *Baroness Rothschild* and *Prince Camille de Rohan*, I declare! I'm to have one too, Amy;" and kissing each of them, with perhaps a suspicion of jealousy, the pretty tableau was complete.

Bailey the gardener had made up his hot-beds unusually early this year, and it may be owing to the unfortunate accident to Edith Merriman some few weeks before this time that the beds were hurried on too precipitately, as he was naturally anxious after what had happened to cover over his "brick-badge" foundations. But a very early spring had been followed, as is not unfrequently the case, by a short return of almost winter weather, and poor Bailey began to make up his mind that his work in some sense would have to be done over again. Accordingly, he had asked the young Singletons to "give him a hand" one afternoon in fresh lining the hot-beds.

"You see, sir," said he to George one morning, "we was a'most too quick with the manure the day after Miss Edith come such a cropper over they stones, that the heat has gone down wonderful, and more than I like, and we must just line the beds, sir."

"What's that, Bailey? What do you mean by lining the beds?"

"Well, sir, if you and Mr. Tom happens to be about just arter my dinner to-day, I'll show you, and tell you all about the beds as I can."

"I suppose," said George to his brother Tom, on their way to Mr. Haredale's the same morning—for their interview with Bailey had taken place some time before breakfast—"Charles Merriman would not care to take up any gardening with us to-day, would he?"

"Not he," said Tom. "I shouldn't fancy that at all in his line."

Arrived at Mr. Haredale's, they found young Charles, however, already hard at work, or at least apparently so. But shortly afterwards he left, saying he was going back to the manor, and might perhaps join them in kitchen gardening that day. Little more than three hours later the party at the manor was assembling for luncheon and Amy was wondering why her uncle did not come down, when presently she saw him walking quickly down the garden towards the hall door, looking a little flushed and put out, and with him, too, came young Charles Merriman, a very sheepish and crestfallen appearance that he wore evidently betokening something amiss.

And this is what had just taken place. Old Mr. Singleton had found occasion to visit Dobbin, the cottager, about some pea and bean sticks soon after twelve o'clock, at whose small garden gate, however, he had, much to his astonishment, just espied Mr. Charles Merriman.

"What in the world brings you here, Master Charlie?" said the old gentleman. "I thought you were with the boys at Mr. Haredale's?"

"THERE STOOD OLD DOBBIN, AND ALICE, HIS GRAND-DAUGHTER."

"I've just left there, sir, and—in fact, as I'm going to help them this afternoon, I thought, er—I would get a lesson from old Dobbin first."

True enough, there down the little garden stood old Dobbin, and Alice, his grand-daughter, close to him, a very picture in an old Dolly Varden hat. Quickly giving his directions to Dobbin, he overtook Charlie, who had already begun awkwardly sauntering home.

"This will never do, my boy," said the old gentleman. "What is to become of your studies at this rate?" But other thoughts were in his mind as they both soon afterwards came in sight of Amy Singleton

from the dining-room window. An hour later, and Bailey was momentarily expecting the young Singletons, who very soon afterwards stood by the side of the garden frames.

"Now," said Bailey, "here's all this heat gone down, and put me out sadly: I never knew it so bad. You see, Mas'r George, it's just as I told you a few weeks ago: we was too much in a hurry to get the beds up, and although we got the manure in a very good condition at the time, yet by putting it nearly all of a heap *at once*, the heat was great at first, and then in the cold weather that came, it suddenly got too slack. Now we must get away all this manure that sticks out in front of the frame right down to the bottom, and if we can, we must even, though carefully, undermine it a little, and we must replace it at once by hot manure, and by plenty of it, too—even with more than we have taken away. And we may have even to serve the back of the frame the same way. This will revive the heat a good deal, or if it didn't, our cucumbers, or certainly our melons in the other frame would never get along. Fortunately, though, I ain't put the melons in yet, for it's full soon for them, and I want a regular good heat for *them*."

"What's that old frame got in it, Bailey, over there?"

"That one, sir? Why, bless yer, that's pretty nigh done for, but I got all my calceolaria and verbena in there—not in heat, you know, sir, for there ain't no manure there at all, but I kept them young cuttings all alive through the winter, 'cos we was just crowded out in the greenhouse, and the frost ain't touched them, and they're as right as a trivet. Last Michaelmas I planted the young cuttings in the open soil and just popped the old frame on the top of them, and when the frost came I just chucked a bit o' matting right over it."

This was some of the day's gardening, but Charles Merriman had not taken part in it, nor had either of the young gardeners missed him.

THE REV. J. STURGIS'S FINDS.

BY FRANCES A. GERARD.

THE Rev. Robert Sturgis was a book fancier; his soul delighted in rare editions of gilt-edged Aldines, smooth of type with rivulets of margin, or the more compact but equally-to-be-desired little Elzevir, black-lettered, parchment-bound, with a colophon title-page, "and with paper, print, and legibility."

The Rev. Robert's face was well-known at book-stalls and sales. He was always hunting amongst the book boxes outside, for ever carrying off an *undoubted* Elzevir for a mere song—a treasure all unknown to the wary seller. When a big sale was on, the postman's bag would be full of catalogues from the great auctioneers of book-sales, all to be marked carefully and studied well by the vicar, who, when the time came round, would take a jaunt to town, and return laden with what the wife of his bosom was wont to designate as "trash."

It was a thorn in the good man's flesh, this want of appreciation (to call it by a mild name) on the part of Mrs. Sturgis. Many a time it poisoned his pleasure in a new acquisition, and sometimes he was weak enough (but there are apologies to be made for such weakness) to smuggle the new purchases into the library when he knew the vicaress was well out of the way; for he was in all things a man of peace. His *confidante* on these occasions was his daughter Polly. Polly loved her father with a tenderness that belongs to gentle natures like hers. She was glad of what gave him pleasure. "Poor papa! his joys were few," she thought; so she helped him loyally in the smuggling of the large brown-paper parcels, although the unpacking and storing away the books blackened her pretty fingers, and listened with apparent interest and much inward amusement to his raptures over each volume.

"Look at this," he would say, taking hold of an enormous wood-bound tome: "it's unique, it's splendid! Polly, my child, there's only a few of this treasure in the world—look here: it's the best Latin edition, thick royal folio. The sides, see, my child, the sides are richly blind tooled—there are no washed leaves, and the six additional leaves are at the end."

"Then you have really got the Chronicle," cried Polly, who, with her cotton frock tucked up, was kneeling on the floor, finding homes for a new batch the vicar had brought back from a surreptitious visit to town. She was a little excited, for she had heard so much of this long-desired treasure. She had got up now very quickly, and came and stood beside the vicar's chair, while he, glowing with triumph, turned over the leaves of this really rare book, the joy of all collectors, for it is one of the oldest illustrated works printed at Nuremberg by Köberger.

Polly was full of sympathy and delight as she looked at the queer finial letters and the grotesque plates that adorned the quaint old pages. She had caught a little of her father's love for such things, and partly to please him and a little to please herself, she had picked up a good deal of ancient book lore, and could tell the marks of a really rare edition fairly well. Her sympathy in his tastes was very precious to the vicar, who was a good deal harried by Mrs. Sturgis. To say the truth, the poor lady had some cause for complaint, for, putting aside the dust

that this "rubbish" (that was her way of speaking of the sacred books) caused, from her point of view, the money that was constantly going into the booksellers' pockets might have been better spent. "It would have been different had your father been a bachelor," she would say to Polly, who played *confidante* to both parents, "but a man with a wife and family has no business to spend money on 'trash!'"

"But books are not 'trash,' mother," the girl would say; "and surely, if everybody thought as you do there would be no collectors and no libraries."

"And very little loss it would be," returned her mother; "the half of those books are only fit for waste paper—the very smell of them makes me sick; and to think of your father throwing good money after them, when he has four boys and you to provide for! It's selfish folly, that's what it is; and he'll live to repent it, and you too, for encouraging him!"

These words came to Polly as she stood beside her father, looking at the Chronicle. She knew it had been set down in one list at thirty-five pounds—surely he had not given all that for it? She looked at him anxiously.

"I am afraid it has cost a lot of money, dear;" and when she said this, the vicar shut the book with some impatience—even from his darling he did not like to be reminded of his own weakness.

"Oh, of course!" he said, "I am to indulge myself in nothing; but if I am going to be brought to book by you, Polly—it's not right of you—you shouldn't ask me these questions; not that I mind from you, exactly," he went on, softening at the sight of her distressed face, "only that when I do a thing for the good of my family," continued the vicar, getting up and walking about the room—"everyone knows the value of these things; they have always a market, and these books that your mother despises will, one day, bring in money. The Boccaccio is a genuine Aldine, and the Shakespeare folios are worth hundreds. Remember that, Polly, and never let them be knocked down by a common auctioneer—there is no place like Piccadilly: they know there what a book is, and could tell you that if I have spent, I have only laid up the money on these shelves instead of in a bank."

"To be sure, darling," said Polly; "and I was a horrid girl to say a word!—you are so much wiser than I am; and you mustn't talk about leaving us, dear; you will live for a hundred years;" and, with tears in her eyes, the girl put her arms round the vicar's neck, and kissed him with her fresh young lips.

The Rev. Robert was, after all, a happy man: to have such a daughter was worth all the folios of Aldine, Elzevir, and Köberger put together.

Just then there came a rustling of silk along the passage, and the vicaress's voice was heard outside. Father and daughter started; Polly made a dash at the brown paper and twine which would betray the new arrivals, while the vicar, with a guilty look, threw his overcoat over the Chronicle. To their surprise, Mrs. Sturgis came in smiling pleasantly: a fact which was accounted for by her being accompanied by a stranger, to whom she was saying, "This is the library, Sir John; I believe it is a wonderful collec——" then, with a sudden change of voice, "Oh, so you have come back? This is Sir John Biddulph—I was telling him of your books—he, too, is a collector, but of course that is quite different. I don't mind saying it is a very expensive taste for a man with a family, Sir John——"

"But, my dear," said the vicar nervously, "I collect in a very small way, and as I was just saying to Polly here, it's only laying money on shelves instead of in a bank."

Polly, thus brought into evidence, had now to come forward, blushing scarlet at being found in so untidy a condition, for her frock was still tucked up, her hair was pushed off her hot face, and her hands! Well, we all know the result of handling dusty volumes.

"Why, my gracious, Polly!" cried her mother, "what have you been doing? I do believe you've been at those horrid books again!"

"Miss Sturgis is then also a book fancier," said Sir John in a kind voice, his eyes resting admiringly on the young face. "It is not often we find young ladies care for such things."

"And much better they don't," snapped Mrs. Sturgis. "Not that it's altogether Polly's fault," she added, with a severe look at the vicar, to which he instantly replied:

"No, my dear, it is mine. I am afraid Polly was helping me this morning; not but what she likes it, and really, for her age, and not having studied much, she knows a good deal. I think you could hardly puzzle her as to a genuine Aldine."

"She must come and see my books," said Sir John, who was still looking at Polly. "I have some good editions; and, Mrs. Sturgis, you will come next week, won't you? Lady Elizabeth will be with me, and we shall have something beside the books," he went on, smiling at Polly—"something I am sure you will like, for we shall have some young folk, and if the weather is fine—as it is sure to be—we can go picnicing in the woods."

That evening Sir John was seated in his commodious reading-room, with his best loved books about him, but for the first time for many years they failed to interest him—between him and the printed page would come the recollection of the pretty blushing face of the vicar's daughter, until at last, in a sort of pet, the baronet threw the book from him, and, with his pipe in his mouth, gave himself up to meditation. As may be imagined, Sir John had not reached his present age (he was close upon forty) without having been exposed to many an assault. Once, and only once, had he been on the point of surrendering, but this, his solitary love episode, lay more than fifteen years behind him: it was a long road to look back on, and Sir John was not a man to encourage useless regret; he had come to grief, got a bad fall, and that was the end of the story—only some way, from that day, life seemed to him different: the fairest faces smiled on him in vain; and as time went on, his brother's wife, Lady Elizabeth, began to look upon her boy as the future heir and baronet, and Sir John was well pleased it should be so; but to-night, the old feelings, the old dreams, came

back—he saw a girlish figure flitting about: he heard the ring of a girlish laugh! How tender she was to that bore of a vicar! How she had blackened her delicate little fingers dusting his books!—and how clever, too!—a sweet creature!—how those brothers seemed to love her!—and her name, Polly—he thought he had never heard a sweeter name! He wondered, had she already a lover—that long-legged curate who came in after luncheon? He was evidently far gone, but Polly had treated him coolly—she wouldn't throw herself away on a fellow like that.

It was only when the butler came in with his candle that Sir John awoke from his waking dreams.

"What a fool I am, to be sure!" he thought. "At my age, why, Polly could be my daughter." After all, it was only Polly and the vicar who accepted Sir John's invitation. Mrs. Sturgis developed a tiresome face-ache, which no amount of stuping with poppy-heads could bring into visiting shape. The only comfort the sufferer could take out of this accident was to harry her husband and daughter with her lamentations over her ill-fortune, but when Polly offered, with sublime self-sacrifice, to stay at home and nurse her, she was met with, "Thank God, I never was selfish, like your father!" This refusal of her services was very pleasant to Polly, whose heart was much set upon the visit. She was dying to have a peep at the world of which only rumours reached the quiet vicarage, and at the end of the first two or three days she was inclined to consider the world very ill-treated. Even her father, she thought, misjudged it somewhat, "for I am sure everyone is so nice and kind," thought Polly. "I haven't heard anyone say an uncharitable word of anyone. Lady Elizabeth knits petticoats for the poor, and that beautiful Mrs. Jennard visits in the East-End—this certainly is not 'the world' against which I was warned."

Polly had made these reflections while she was dressing for the picnic in the woods which Sir John had promised her. Perhaps Polly's lenient views of her neighbour were tinged by her inward content. Never had she felt so happy—and yet, had she analysed her happiness, she would have found it was due altogether to her host's kindness. It was with him she had gone over the house and seen the haunted room and the abbot's crypt. Seated beside him on the box-seat of the drag, she had driven to Wargrave, and clambered up and down the steep ascent to the old ruin; and the mornings in the library, how pleasant they had been! The vicar busy, with the books, while she and Sir John sat in the deep mullioned windows and talked, the girl innocently letting the baronet have an insight into her home life, her little troubles, and even the anxiety she felt lest the books that her father loved so well might not lead to mischief: "for it's a lot of money to give for one book, like the Chronicle," she said; "and there is Bobby should go to the University this year; still, it is hard father shouldn't have his pleasure, he is so dear."

"I never met so simple a character," returned Sir John; "it is the Vicar of Wakefield in real life. And, Miss Polly, you mustn't mind about Bob, he shall go to college, in spite of the Nuremberg Chronicle."

But to this Polly rejoined that she did not see how that could be, unless, indeed, the vicar could be induced to part with the book which he says should fetch a great price, "although he had it a bargain," added Polly, who in some respects resembled her father's prototype, Goldsmith's vicar.

"Well, he and I shall have a talk over it," said Sir John; and when he said this even Polly's simplicity could not fail of understanding that he meant in some way to do a service. She blushed all over her fair young face; the vicar had brought up his children to ask no favours of any man.

"Oh, you mustn't think——" she said.

"I think nothing but good of you, Miss Polly," interrupted Sir John, taking her hand in his. "I think you are not only the prettiest, but the——"

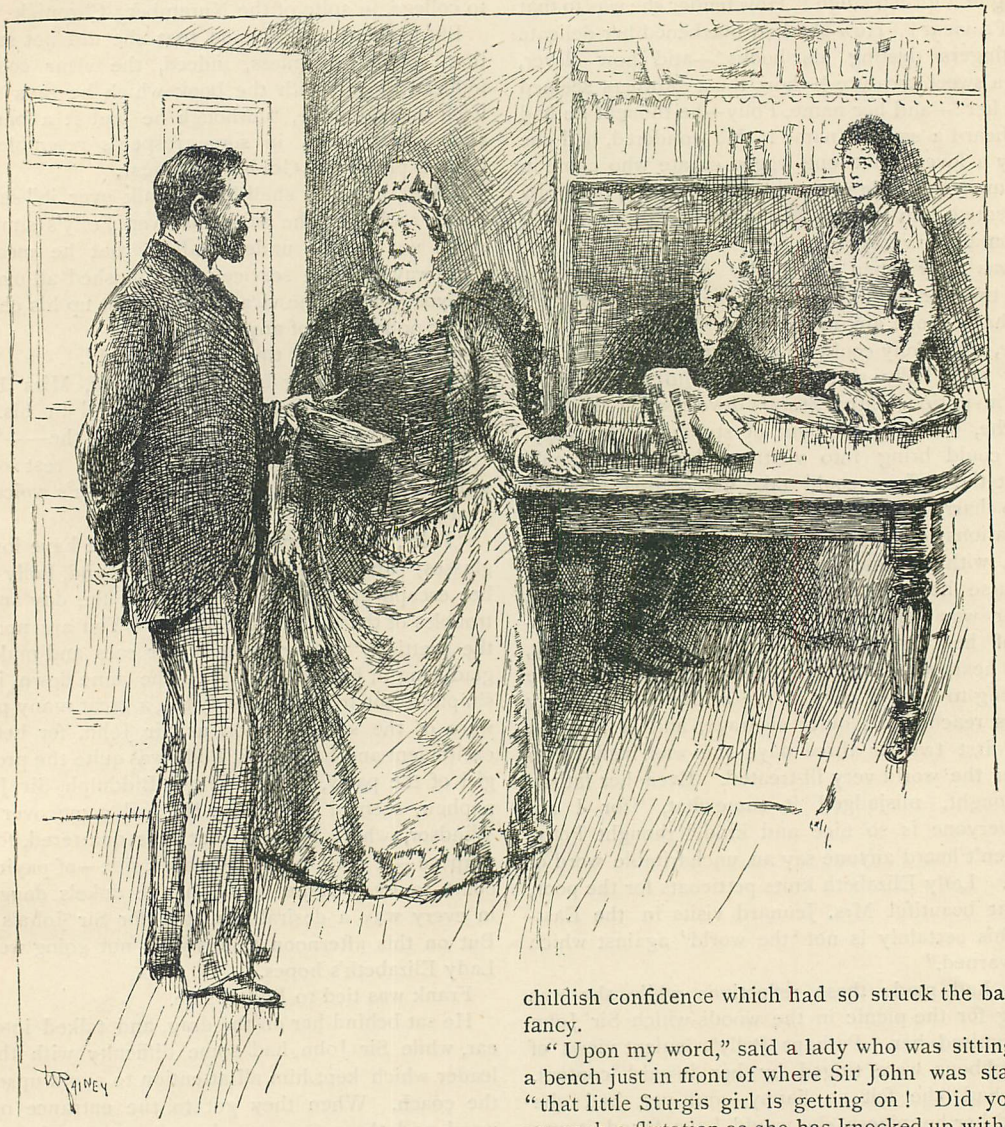
Polly was not destined to hear the rest of the sentence, for at that moment the vicar's voice was heard.

"Polly, Polly, come here, my child; I have lost my glasses;" and when the glasses were found, Polly made her escape upstairs, but all through the day and the troubles of the toilette, the words, "You are not only the prettiest," were ringing in her ears and making a glad song in her heart. When she came down, in her simple cotton frock and shady hat, a great many people were of the same opinion as Sir John, for between excitement and happiness, Polly was quite the prettiest girl of the party, and so Frank Biddulph, Sir John's nephew, seemed to think. He had come over from Windsor, where his regiment was quartered, for the purpose—at least on his mother's side—of paying his court to Lady Agnes Paulton, the duke's daughter: in every way a desirable match for Sir John's heir. But on this afternoon things were not going well for Lady Elizabeth's hopes.

Frank was tied to Polly's side.

He sat behind her on the drag, and talked into her ear, while Sir John had some difficulty with the off leader which kept him all attention to avoid upsetting the coach. When they got to the entrance of the wood and the young people were to get down and walk, Frank constituted himself Polly's escort, while Lady Agnes, whose boots were tight, limped behind. Her ladyship was in a very bad temper. She was fair and given to freckle, and her hat did not shade her as Polly's did. She dressed like a fashion-plate, and she and her maid had spent infinite time and trouble in getting up a shepherdess costume for this rustic party. It was trying to hear Frank extolling Polly's cotton frock as the very thing for the country. "No lace nor trimmings," he said; and just then Lady Agnes's frills caught on the hedge, and yards of Valenciennes wound round her legs. Frank cut it off with his penknife, and Polly, all sympathy for the pretty dress and the wearer, went on her knees, and taking a neat little "housewife" from her pocket, sewed up the rent, while her ladyship hated her all the more.

It was worse when they got to the wood where the



"'THIS IS THE LIBRARY, SIR JOHN'" (*p.* 210).

tea was to come off. Here Polly was in her element: she was ready to help in laying the table and lighting the fire to boil the water for the gispy kettle.

"Please, let us do all ourselves," she said to Sir John: "it's twice the fun." And here again Frank Biddulph made himself her companion.

He was a nice, frank young fellow, and Polly thought him a good-natured boy. It never occurred to her that she was interfering with Lady Elizabeth's matrimonial projects, or that Sir John—but that came later. Now his thoughts were very much on her as he stood behind a tree watching her. How sweet and girlish she was—how free from any young lady tricks—how unlike Lady Agnes—how well she was looking, so fresh and radiant: she was laughing at some joke of Frank's. She lifted her eyes to his with just the same childish confidence which had so struck the baronet's fancy.

"Upon my word," said a lady who was sitting upon a bench just in front of where Sir John was standing, "that little Sturgis girl is getting on! Did you ever see such a flirtation as she has knocked up with Frank Biddulph?"

"*I* thought she was setting her cap at our veteran host," returned her companion, who was no other than the charitable Mrs. Jennard. "You should have seen her in the library this morning, doing the old book business!"

"I suppose she thinks the nephew a better match—more suitable as to age," yawned old Captain Tracy.

"Oh, she hadn't much chance of Sir John; he is a regular old soldier—escaped a hundred times: not likely to be hit by a country Miss!"

"I don't know. As for that, there's no fool like an old one," laughed another of the party.

"I'll pay old Kent out for that," thought Sir John. "A nice lot, altogether! A veteran, am I? And an old fool!"

As chance would have it, he knocked up against Frank and Polly as he was threading his way through

the wood in no very amiable frame of mind. The young man was brimming over with spirits, Polly was laughing at his sallies.

"Oh, I say, Uncle, what a jolly day! It's awfully good fun: a regular ripper!"

"Your language, Frank, is more fit for the stable than for a lady's ear," said Sir John coldly.

"Oh, Miss Sturgis don't mind; do you, Miss Sturgis? And, by the by, Uncle, we want to make a change in the programme. We want, she and I, to go back in my dog-cart."

"Oh, but, indeed," began Polly. "I assure you I don't want——"

"Oh, but you do," persisted Frank. "You said just now how you liked spinning along in the night air. Awfully good fun; and I'm an awfully good whip!"

"But indeed, I don't want the dog-cart," cried Polly in great distress, and trying to catch Sir John's eye, which was steadily averted from her while he told Frank to make the necessary arrangement; and then he turned on his heel, and walked away with as much dignity as he could command.

"No, no, Miss Polly," he said: "you can't play fast and loose in that fashion. If you want the nephew you must give up the uncle. Who would have thought it, with her simple ways and those eyes, like a child's? Well, it's good to be warned in time. I am glad I did not make a fool of myself."

* * * * * *

Two years run away very quickly when a man is knocking about the big continent of America. Sir John had been away fully that time, and now that he was home there didn't seem any particular reason why he should have come. Some of his friends didn't know he had gone, and others thought he had been at Biarritz or the Italian lakes, and most people were too much taken up marrying their daughters or themselves to trouble where he had been; from this point of view it was rather a mistake to have gone at all; for some way, thought Sir John rather ruefully, one drops out of everything. There was one good thing: he was quite cured of his folly as to the vicar's daughter, still he could not help feeling a twinge when he heard the vicar was dead. Poor little girl! she was so fond of her father, and he was a good simple soul. What had become of the family nobody knew; it was a year and more since they had left. Soon after the vicar's death there had been an auction, but the books had not been sold; or at least only a few: the others had been sent away to London.

Sir John felt very guilty when he heard this story. He had certainly given Polly to understand he meant to help the family. So he had, only "it was all my selfish folly," he thought, "thinking of a girl that might be my daughter." Poor pretty Polly! He was very sorry for her, very anxious to make amends as far as he could. He had a certain sense of having behaved badly to her. He had in a way promised that he would do something for the brother: yes, he had said words to that effect; and although he was quite cured of his temporary fancy, there was no reason why he should not help the vicar's family.

He made a hunt through the catalogues of book sales which had come with unwearying punctuality while he was absent, and after a search of more than an hour, came upon the announcement of the sale in Piccadilly, of the well-chosen library of rare books belonging to the late Robert Sturgis, Vicar of Stokesay, including some Shakespeare folios, handsomely bound, a handsome copy of Boccaccio, some two hundred English plays, very rare, and an exceedingly fine copy of the Nuremberg Chronicle, best Latin edition, thick royal folio, with large and spirited wood-cuts, all brilliant impressions and uncoloured; very large, sound copy in old black morocco, very neat, the sides richly blind-tooled, printed by Köberger, 1493.

When Sir John read these words it seemed to bring back to him Polly's earnest face, and he heard her sweet voice: "It is hard that father shouldn't have his pleasure." Poor little girl! he had behaved to her like a brute. He went up to town early next morning, and drove straight to the establishment of the "Bismarck" of the old-book trade, and was shown at once to the den of the great man. Yes, the dealer remembered the Vicar of Stokesay: he was a man of nice taste, but he was too fond of talking of Elzevirs and Aldines. Like all amateurs, he had a sale, but it brought in very little: more was the pity, as he left a family in poor circumstances. The Chronicle? No, it hadn't been sold: it was in the shop; it was genuine; and if Sir John hadn't it, he would do well to take it: it was going a bargain.

"But I don't want a bargain," cried Sir John; "the vicar was a friend!"

"Ah! you are a gentleman," said Bismarck, as the baronet handed him a cheque.

Then Sir John, who felt only half his work was done, got into his cab, and told the driver to take him to Idrone Terrace, Clapham Park. This was the address the bookseller had given him, adding much praise of Miss Sturgis. "She knows more about books than her father did, for all his talk of Elzevirs and Aldines; and she is a worthy young lady: has put her shoulder to the wheel, I can tell you." He did not say what form her labours had taken, but Sir John concluded it was the usual daily governessing.

"And I could have prevented this," he thought, with much self-reproach, as the cab made its endless pilgrimage through Battersea and up Lavender Hill, till it stopped at a small two-storied house. There was a little garden in front, up which the baronet went slowly, pulling his beard nervously. He was terribly nervous, as most kind-hearted men are when brought face to face with sorrow.

"I never liked that Mrs. Sturgis; she bullied Polly," thought Sir John as he pulled the bell. "But of course she will be in: that's always my luck."

But here he was libelling his luck, for the vicar's widow was at that moment in bed with an attack of her old enemy—face-ache—and better still, it was Polly who opened the door—thinner and paler, but prettier than ever.

When she saw the visitor she gave a little cry, which

Sir John was quick to note was one of pleasure, but when they got into the little sitting-room off the narrow hall she looked at him piteously, her lower lip trembled like a child when it is about to cry. "Don't, my dear, don't!" said poor Sir John, taking her hand in his. The sound of his voice seemed to overset the small measure of composure she was mistress of. With a little inarticulate protest, as if begging his pardon, she sank down upon the couch, and, hiding her head on the cushion, sobbed as if her heart would break. The baronet in great distress stood beside her, looking at her; he was powerless to console her. His own eyes were wet with a suspicious moisture. "My dear child," he said at last, "you will make yourself ill. Shall I go away, and come another day?"

"No, no," sobbed Polly, and the hand he held tightened its clasp. Some way these words gave Sir John courage. He sat down beside the weeping girl. The sofa was horsehair and very lumpy and hard, but what did that matter? He bent tenderly over the slight girlish figure, and gently raised the bent head.

"My dear," he said, still adhering to the paternal style of address, "I behaved very badly to you once. I dare say you forget all about it, but I don't; and I came here to-day to tell you that anything I can do to repair my fault I will do, if you will only say you forgive me."

Polly's eyes were lifted to his face; they were blurred with tears, but they had the old confiding look. "Forgive you," she said, "for what? You were always so kind, only I would like to know what it was that changed everything. You remember the day of the picnic?"

"I do. I was a fool—an odious, ill-tempered, jealous fool!"

"Jealous!" repeated Polly. "If you only knew?" then she stopped, her face flushing crimson.

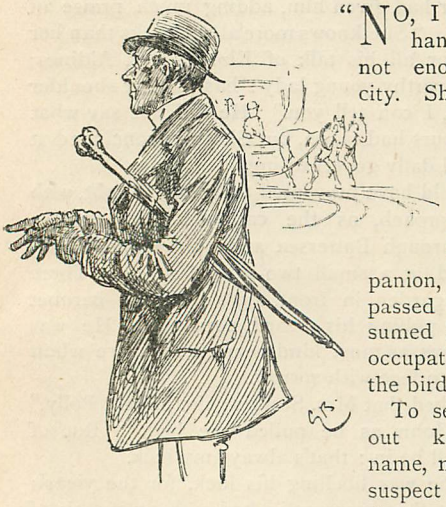
"Knew what?" cried Sir John. "Oh, Polly! do not let us make any more mistakes; we have had enough of them. I have lost two years of happiness by my folly; do not punish me more. I loved you then, I love you now, but I am old enough to be your father. Oh, my love, my sweet Polly! could you care for me enough"—here his voice trembled, and sank almost to a whisper, but Polly heard—"to be my wife?"

Polly's answer must have been satisfactory, judging by the time he stayed. He came nearly every day after this, and by and by there was a quiet wedding one morning at St. Paul's, Kensington, at which Lady Elizabeth did not put in an appearance. Frank, however, was his uncle's best man: he said it was awfully jolly to have an aunt the same age as himself; but then, according to his mother, Frank was always a fool.

One word more. In the library at Biddulph Towers, where all books are duly honoured, there is one set aside for special reverence; it has a case of its own, and its name is the Nuremberg Chronicle.

ABOUT TRAMS.

BY F. M. HOLMES.



WAITING FOR HIS CARRIAGE.

"NO, I never shake hands; I have not enough electricity. Shaking hands takes away one's electricity!"

And looking askance at his companion, the speaker passed on, and resumed his harmless occupation of feeding the birds.

To see him without knowing his name, no one would suspect him to be the founder of a great system of travel, the results of which are to be seen in many cities.

Yet so it is. The harmless old gentleman who in his later days, we have been told, loves to feed the birds in the New York public gardens, and refuses to shake hands, is none other than Mr. George Francis Train, the introducer—or the populariser—of street tramways as we now know them.

And we know them very well. It is only twenty-one years since the Tramways Act of 1870 was passed. Yet we have nearly a thousand miles of road open, and millions of capital invested in them. All kinds of people use them: from the grimy coal-heaver to the neatly attired lawyer—from the tawdry "'Ariet" to the elegantly dressed matron.

"Yes, I always say that my carriage is at my door," exclaimed a popular public man jocosely to me one day, as I was taking leave of him; for outside his garden gate ran a line of tram-cars, by which he could easily and cheaply be taken to many parts of the city where he lived.

"When I was getting better," said another, who had recovered from a long illness, "I used to take the air on the top of a tram;" and a capital method no doubt he found it. This particular line ran from a certain point in the north of London to Euston Road, and he was wont to ride as far as the car went, and then return by it. In the pleasant sunshine, and

with the varying panorama of London streets spread out before him, he would find it an agreeable change.

Damsels who work appear to patronise the convenient cars very largely; and numbers of them always carry baskets. What those mysterious baskets contain we cannot conceive, unless it be sandwiches or bread and butter—perhaps pickles: for some of the London work-girls seem to love the pungent pickle very much. The work-girl delighteth in her little basket, with its shut-up lid, even as her wealthier sister loveth the dainty reticule or the pleasant purse. And if the car be full when work-girls enter, one bulky person will probably deposit herself in the lap of another. Whereupon there is hilarity!

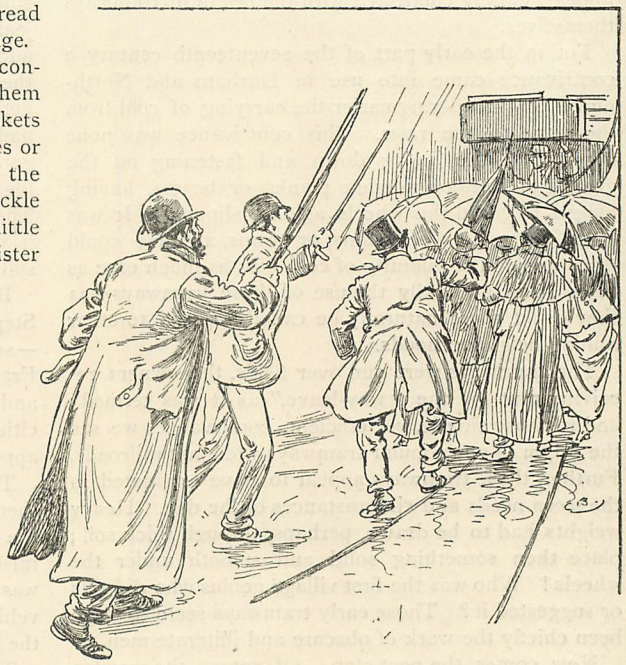
"Hold tight!" sings out the conductor as a new passenger grasps the rail or commences to climb the stairs to the top. "Hold tight!" and he pulls the gong-strap with a will, and on jogs the car. He has to keep time, and he does not want to lose some of his precious minutes of rest at his journey's end, nor does he want an accident; so "Hold tight!" has become quite a phrase of tramway travel. Perhaps this is partly due to the numbers of women who now ride on the roof. The tramways themselves have played their part in a marked change in social habits, for the easy ascent to the roof has led many women to enjoy the breeze on the top; and indeed it sometimes seems that the position of affairs is reversed, and that more men now ride inside and more women on the roof. Yet the prejudice against women riding outside lingers, for we know a certain hospital which has a rule forbidding the nurses so to demean themselves.

"Quite a different class of people on that line," vouchsafes a conductor to us, mentioning a certain route; and much more unpleasant, we suspect, he found them to get on with. Indeed, he went on to hint that the managers punished a man for slight derelictions of duty by taking him off his own line and placing him on that route.

On the one, the people would be quiet, orderly, and well-behaved generally. Should they exceed the distance of their fares, they pay directly their attention is called to it, and a passenger changing cars at the junction sometimes finds himself in quite a different social atmosphere.

For on the other there might be loud talking, roughness, drink sometimes, and grumbling little manœuvres to ride farther than the fare paid for. What is a wearied conductor to do, when, late at night, a man sticks his hands in his pocket, and resolutely refuses in strong language to pay more? On, on jogs the car, and every minute brings him nearer his goal. The passengers stare gloomily, the defaulter asserts roundly he never paid more than a penny to so-and-so.

Conductor pulls the gong; car stops; deadlock worse than ever. Driver, impatient outside, roars that the man must pay or turn out. Is the conductor to take the man by the shoulders and turn him out? Is he to call a policeman? The defaulter generally yields after the tram has stopped, because he cannot compel



Full inside

the car to go on, and he is not now nearing his journey's end. He sheers off, and the car jogs on with objurgatory remarks shouted as the distance between them increases.

Sometimes a woman is the defaulter; with much volubility she shrilly declares that she always had been to such and such a street for the penny, and the conductor points to his table of fares and argues in vain. Perhaps the car has to be stopped in her case also, but she, too, in time departs, vociferating.

But of the number of persons who daily use the popular trams, how many know or care as to their origin or the cause of their name? Even the doctors disagree—a charming little way they have at times—upon the latter point. Who invented the trams? and how came they to be called by that strange name?

Well, one opinion is that "tram" is an abbreviation of the surname of Benjamin Outram, who, about the year 1800, improved railroads for vehicles used in the north. Certainly, if they were called Outram roads, or ways, the descent to "tram" is likely enough.

But there is an explanation even more feasible. Tram, it appears, was an old provincial word for waggon, and these roads being for waggons to run upon more easily, might very naturally come to be called tramways or tramroads.

Nevertheless, there is a reason even still more likely. Tram is an old word for a wooden beam, and of wooden beams the rails were originally made. So the word tramway would be literally accurate.

Thus we have three explanations, and we can select which we please, or regard them all with equal favour. For ourselves we incline to the last of the three. It throws some light on the early history of trams—and

appears closely connected with the origin of tramways themselves.

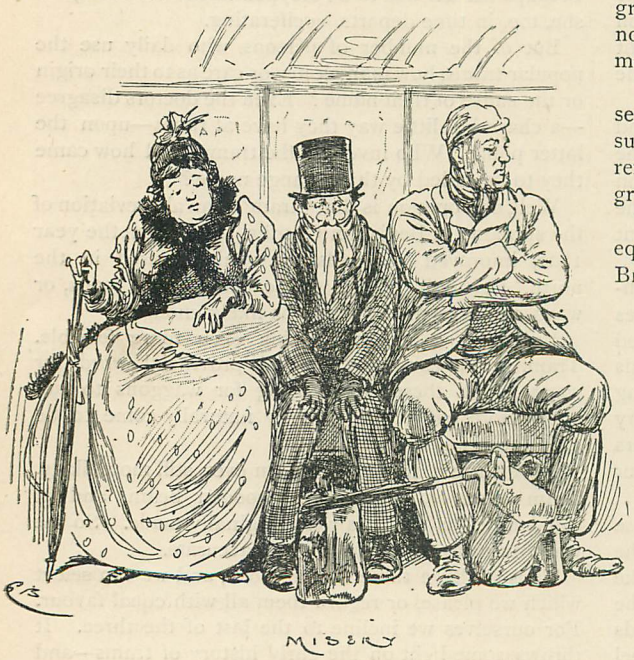
For in the early part of the seventeenth century a contrivance came into use in Durham and Northumberland rendering easier the carrying of coal from the mine to the river. This contrivance was none other than the laying down and fastening on the ground of lines of wooden planks or beams, having flanges to guard the wheels against slipping. It was found that on these beams, or trams, a horse could draw double the quantity of coal with as much ease as before, and gradually the use of these tramways—as they could most naturally be called—spread to other mining neighbourhoods.

The tramways were run over fields, the owners receiving rent for the "way-leave," as it was termed; and in those simple, yet efficient, contrivances we see the origin of our popular tramways and giant railroads. Further, these tramways appear to have originated in the stern needs and circumstances of the day. Heavy weights had to be drawn, perhaps, through thick soil; place then something solid and smooth under the wheels! Who was the first village genius who did this or suggested it? Those early tramways seem to have been chiefly the work of obscure and illiterate men.

Now comes the next step. Of course, the wooden beams wore out; so someone or some set of men placed iron slips on the beams of wood. But this achievement was not reached until about the year 1700, and it was not found to be the height of success.

So, some forty years afterwards, rails of cast iron were substituted, fastened on cross-beams or sleepers of wood. This kind of tramway became general in mining neighbourhoods after the famous year of the rebellion of 1745.

But canals soon after came into favour, and their supporters viewed the tramway or railway with jealousy. Although, therefore, the ideas became adopted of putting flanges on the wheels instead of on the rails, also of fastening three or four waggons together and hauling them by horses, yet the railroad had to wait in sullen silence until the genius of the good fairy George Stephenson touched it into jubilant life and spirits with his magic wand—the locomotive. Then the railway went ahead with rushing speed, and it was the turn of the canal to become slow and sullen.



But the street tramways had to wait for their George Stephenson—in the person of Mr. George Francis Train—some thirty years longer. Toubât, an engineer from France, constructed a tramway in New York in 1852, and others were soon after laid down in some other cities of America. With these operations Mr. Train appears to have had much to do.

The rails, however, were not exactly as we know them now, one side of the groove being higher than the other. Then came the step-rail, one part being raised about an inch higher than the remainder, which was smooth. On the latter the wheels of ordinary vehicles could run, while the tram-car wheel ran on the higher, the "step" down being for the flange.

This does not seem a very acceptable form for preventing accidents, and we are not surprised when Mr. George Francis Train endeavoured to get an Act through the British Parliament for this sort of tramway in London that he failed. However, he obtained the consent of road authorities at Birkenhead in 1860, and there—so far as we can discover—the first street tramway, as we now understand the term, was laid in Britain. The rails had a three-quarter inch step. Soon after one with half an inch step was laid in Victoria Street, London. The flat part of the rail, however, was slippery, and with the "step" caused great inconvenience and many accidents. So we are not surprised that the tramway was removed in a few months.

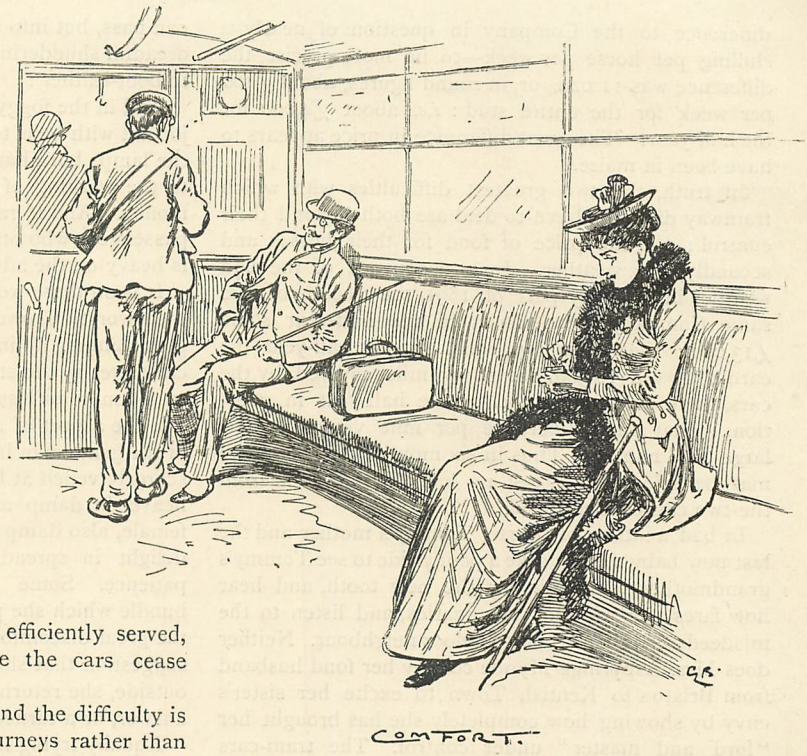
Nor was it entirely due to insular pride and Conservatism: indeed, one tramway was indicted with success as a nuisance. But in Birkenhead the rails remained, until in 1864, after an experiment with the grooved rail, the whole length was re-laid with it.

That grooved rail, with the sides of the groove equally high, made all the difference to the careful Briton. The rail, too, was placed even with the road, so that the danger of accident was reduced to a minimum, though the step rails are still used in some places in America. The tramway was a failure here until that grooved rail appeared. An Act of Parliament in 1868 authorised nearly seven miles of tramway to be constructed in Liverpool, and two years later the Tramways Act received the Royal assent, empowering the Board of Trade to authorise the making of tramways, with consent of local authorities. Since that time an immense vested interest has grown up in tramways.

At the end of 1889 there were about 950 miles of tramway open, and the capital expended

had been £13,700,000. The Act of 1870, however, provided for the purchase by local authorities of tramways after a lapse of twenty-one years.

To speak broadly, the cars in London are running for sixteen hours daily: that is, from about eight in the morning to near midnight. But the men have periods of relief, so that a day of about twelve-and-a-half to fourteen hours is made. One Company—the London Tramways Company—has reduced its working day to twelve hours, and also increased the pay of its servants. This twelve-hour day is the object at which the men's Union aims, and the only way in which it can be arranged is by introducing additional men to take certain journeys; for the public must be efficiently served, and would not be content to see the cars cease running at ten o'clock at night.



Perhaps the best way to understand the difficulty is to regard the matter as one of journeys rather than of time. Thus, on some lines the cars make thirteen journeys, of an hour and a quarter each; on others a few less, according to distance, bearing in mind that a journey is the travelling of the car to its destination and back. Now, it will be clear that the only way to give a man fewer hours is by releasing him from a certain number of journeys. He cannot, like the happy tourist, break his journey at given points; he must accompany his car throughout, and if he be a conductor, perhaps have to wait at night to pay his money in.

Curiously enough, it seems to be easier to effect the relief journeys on the tramways than on the 'buses. And the reason throws an interesting light on tram and 'bus life. The 'bus driver does not like his horses driven by an unknown hand. He grumbles that his steeds are spoiled by improper treatment or unskilful driving. But it is much easier to guide the jogging pair of tram horses along their beaten track. With them, there is no zig-zagging from one side of the road to the other. There are no briskly careering cabs to evade, no heavy waggons to canter round. No; other vehicles must make way for the steady-going tram-car. The driver whistles shrilly, and the lumbering coal cart must get off the track; and as for the smart cabman—why, he touches his horse without deigning to look round, and away dashes his hansom, showing a very fast pair of heels to the stolid slow-coach behind.

The wages of a tram-car man appear to be about thirty shillings a week. They are certain and steady. The work, no doubt, is often troublesome, and in inclement weather very trying; but it will compare not unfavourably with other forms of slightly skilled labour. The time for a man to learn his work in driving or conducting a car appears to be about four months, during which time one Company at least pays him four-and-sixpence a day. There are few other forms of labour for which a four months' apprenticeship would be considered sufficient.

On the other hand, a day of ten or twelve hours, with its periods of six to twelve minutes' rest at the completion of journeys, should be aimed at by the management, and certainly the granting of one day's rest in every seven. The London Tramways Company appears to follow this wise arrangement, and by its scale of payment its servants attain to a wage of a little over £90 per annum, with an opportunity of rising to the ranks of superior officers. Now, if one Company can make these wise arrangements, why not others?

No doubt the directors have a difficult task. They have to keep running for about sixteen hours daily a constant and regular service of cars: they have to pay shareholders a fair interest for their money: they have to consider the welfare of hundreds of men. Further, there are the horses and their forage to be looked after. One Company had no fewer than an average of 3,254 horses during the first half of the year 1891, and of these, at the close of the year about eighty were reported unfit for work. This speaks well for the care bestowed on the animals and their satisfactory state generally. But the public are not perhaps aware of the vast difference the varying price of food makes to the Companies. As compared with the preceding half year, the six months ending June 30th, 1891, made a

difference to the Company in question of nearly a shilling per horse per week—to be more precise, the difference was 11·02d., or, in round figures, about £160 per week for the entire stud: *i.e.*, about £4,000 for the half-year. The great difference in price appears to have been in maize.

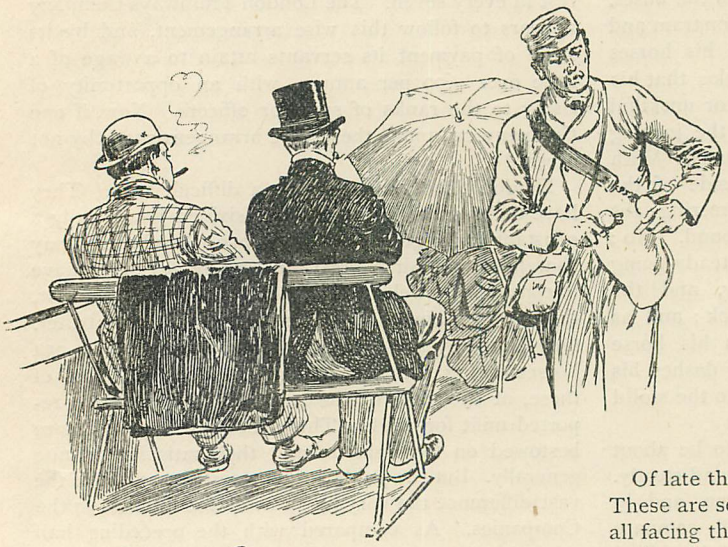
In truth, the two greatest difficulties with which tramway directors have to deal are both beyond their control: viz., the price of food for their horses, and secondly, the weather. In consequence of the bad weather in the early part of 1891, the receipts of this same Company went down in the half-year some £13,000: that is to say, while in one half-year the earnings were 10·38d. for every mile covered by the cars, there were only 9·55d. in the half-year in question. That small difference per mile yet made this large total named. Thus in six months this Company may be said to have lost no less than £17,000 from the two causes mentioned.

In bad weather, of course, Tommy's mother and the last new baby do not take a penny ride to see Tommy's grandmother, and show her the new tooth, and hear how fares she with her rheumatics, and listen to the misdeeds of Juliana, her next door neighbour. Neither does Mrs. Aspyringe Mynde convoy her fond husband from Brixton to Kentish Town to excite her sister's envy by showing how completely she has brought her "lord and master" under control. The tram-cars have to travel, even though Sarah Jane goeth not forth to wander with Richard in London's lovely open spaces, and capture him with seductive arts and the wiles of the eye. No; many and many a penny is lost to the Companies in bad weather, and the pence mount up to many pounds. Then in the snow time—that decks the earth with its white beauty, but is deemed an intolerable nuisance in tramway land—four horses have often to be harnessed to the slow moving car to urge it on its wild career; salt has to be thrown down to make a disgusting slush through which the wheels can pass, but into which the pedestrians plunge with dreadful shuddering; terrible also is the destruction to boot-leather!

And in the foggy days, when the horses are rendered jocund with bells to warn other travellers on the route, the lamps burn hazily all the day long. All these aids to the working of the tram-cars cost the Company money. And if rain should drive into the cars frugal passengers, who otherwise would walk, yet the balance is heavy on the adverse side.

It is on these wet evenings that the cars are seen at their worst. Crowded to excess, with a line of passengers standing up in the middle, with the close air made closer yet by the steam from damp raiment, everybody seems more or less in a terrible state of crotchetiness, and the aspect of affairs is not inviting. The disgust of the gentleman in the spick and span new coat is scarcely veiled at being crushed between a bulky coal-heaver in damp and greasy attire and an expansive female, also damp and greasy, and both seem to take delight in spreading themselves out and trying his patience. Some woman has probably a portentous bundle which she persists in nursing on her knees, to the great discomfort of those about her. To the polite suggestion that she should place it under the staircase outside, she returns a supercilious stare, an insolent answer, or a turned-up nose and a curled lip.

Equally trying is the position of the neat young lady clerk or shop-woman who finds herself sat upon by a burly bricklayer, wet and dirty, smelling of beer, tobacco of the rankest, and perhaps also unsavoury with stale onion! So the tram-car jogs slowly on through the mud and the rain, the passengers anxiously trying their eyesight through the dim windows for their moment of release, the conductor working his way through the crowd with his bell-punch to issue and mark the tickets, or answering inexorably to some weary would-be passenger: "Full inside, lady! Full inside!"



Quite another view is presented on a fine morning, or even in the middle of most days. Then, after the rush to business is over, there is usually plenty of room. Of the forty-two passengers the cars may seat, there are perhaps not above a score. Now there is ample space for damsels to spread out their skirts, and to raise their arms to touch up their back hair: a proceeding in which many of them seem greatly to delight.

In hot and sunny weather a green blind and open windows endeavour to keep the car shady and cool. And if a refreshing breeze is blowing it may be enjoyed on the roof, and the varied sights of London's streets surveyed.

Of late the garden seats have come much into vogue. These are seats placed on the sides of the car roof, but all facing the front, and capable of holding two persons each. Certainly they divide the travellers much more

than the old knife-board—as the one seat running the length of the vehicle is called, and on which the passengers sit back to back. But the garden seats are much heavier, and persons seated on them offer much more passive resistance to the air than on the knife-board. Thus in two ways the garden-seated cars are a much greater tax on the horses; in fact, this was given by the chairman of one Company as the reason why the expense of horse renewal was rising.

The introduction of electricity as a motive power appears likely to be another great help to the development of tramways. In the States the electric car seems everywhere. Steam appears to be a failure. It is both noisy and dirty, and moreover, a menace to the equanimity of that timid animal, the horse; although the engine is boxed round, and looks something like a huge square block of iron advancing on the rails. But it is believed that the quiet and clean electric car can be run for threepence per mile cheaper than steam trams; and three midland towns, Walsall, Wednesbury, and Darlaston, have agreed to adopt electricity in the place of steam.

As we are likely to see a great advance in the use of electricity in the propulsion of tramway cars, we may briefly sketch various methods of applying it. There is first the conduit system, in which the electric power is supplied from a pipe or conduit along the track and below the cars; then there is the accumulator principle, in which each car contains its own electric power, hidden in accumulators or stores placed under the seats; third, there is the overhead plan, where lines like telegraph-wires run beside the track, and the electric power is transmitted to the car by a travelling line or a contrivance called a "fishing rod."

The last is said to be the best for suburban districts and rural roads, and is largely used in America. The second system is to be adopted by the North Metropolitan Company when they can get Parliamentary permission. In this case the accumulators are charged or stored with electricity at a central station, and then can run for about half a day without further attention. An electric car for fifty passengers does not fill nearly so much space in the road as a steam or horse car for the same number. It is strange that despised East London should lead the way in the use of these electric cars, which appear destined to become so popular; yet so it is. Accumulator cars are already running on the Barking Road, and in Birmingham the electric trams, where they run side by side, so to speak, with cable, horse, and steam cars, have been very successful. It is possible, therefore, that if the electric cars prove to be really cheap and reliable in working, as well as elegant and comfortable for passengers, they may solve some of the most pressing difficulties of tramway directors, and lead to a great development in this form of public transit. We shall then be treated to the curious spectacle of numerous cars gliding silent and spectre-like through crowded thoroughfares without any visible means of progression.

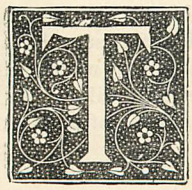
"YOU'LL LOVE ME YET."

By FRANCES HASWELL.

"You'll love me yet, and I can tarry
Your love's protracted growing;
June reared the bunch of flowers you carry
From seeds of April's sowing."—Browning.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

DISAPPOINTMENT.



THREE months have passed away, and the curtain rises on the drawing-room of Beverston House. Mrs. Hornby and her children have come and gone; no one is visible in the spacious, lamp-lighted room except one lady, whom we have not met before. She glances up with an air of anxious expectation as the door opens; but it only admits Sylvia, clad in a white gown of some washing material, which clings rather gracefully to her slight figure. She has pinned a bunch of chrysanthemums at her neck; she has also bestowed an infinitude of pains on her hair, without any marked success.

"I really think it's quite time they were here," says Mrs. Colville. "Can there have been an accident?"

"I hope not. Shall I go to the door and listen?"

"If you please, my dear; one can't help feeling uneasy when trains are behind time."

Sylvia ran out to the front door (not for the first time, by any means), stood still, and listened. Surely there was a rumbling; perhaps it was only the roaring of the hall fire, which had deluded her once before; no, there was the click of the opening gate; the moment which, during the last few weeks, she had rehearsed a hundred times, was close at hand. An overpowering shyness seized her; she left the door open, and fled back to the drawing-room.

"He's come! I heard the gate open!"

"*He*, did you say? Are they not both come?"

"Oh, yes, I suppose so; won't you come out into the hall?"

And Sylvia made herself as invisible as possible behind the stately figure in black satin. The dog-cart stopped before the door; all the blood rushed to Sylvia's cheeks as she recognised a familiar voice speaking to the groom. In another instant the two men were in the hall; and while Aunt Constance—to use language not altogether figurative—was weeping on the neck of her son, Lancelot came forward, took his wife's hand, and said, with a smile, as if they had only parted that morning—

"You thought you'd lost me for good, didn't you? But here I am, to trouble you again. You look well, Sylvia; Beverston air agrees with you."

"I'm quite well, thank you," said she, suddenly losing all the colour Lancelot had complimented her on possessing. "I hope you're quite well?"

"Very well, thanks. But now I must introduce you to Bernard—I beg your pardon—introduce Bernard to you, I should say. Aunt Constance, where's your gratitude to the man who's brought home that prodigal son of yours?"

He kissed his aunt; then, turning to Sylvia—

"And here is the lost son in question!"

Sylvia put out her hand.

"You're quite well now, I hope?"

"Tolerably well, thanks; this terribly energetic husband of yours won't allow anyone to enjoy invalidism in peace."

"That's very hard, if you still feel like an invalid."

"Don't be taken in by him, Sylvia," said Lancelot, "it's nothing but laziness."

"Ah, Mrs. Bassett, it used to be the same thing exactly, when we were boys; I never could sit down comfortably to improve my mind with a book, but he would come and rout me out, to the woods or the stables, or somewhere. Life's an arduous pleasure in Lancelot's society. You'll find it out soon, if you haven't already."

Bernard Colville had picked up a strong American accent, which irritated Sylvia. She made up her mind she was not going to like him. Lancelot, meanwhile, had turned to the servants, and was giving some directions about the luggage.

And this was the scene the poor girl had pictured to herself so often, and in so many different shapes, though never in such a shape as this. A cold weight of disappointment settled at her heart, as she accompanied the little group to the drawing-room, with a vague sense of being left out, somehow; it seemed as if she had found her way accidentally into some strange house where she had no business to be. Lancelot, and Mrs. Colville, and Bernard—they were all relations, and had so much in common, such abundant topics of conversation, while for her, she fancied, there was no place. It was true Lancelot addressed many of his remarks to her, inquired after her mother, and asked a question or two pleasantly enough; while Bernard proffered an elaborate apology for having been the innocent cause of her husband's absence; nevertheless, Sylvia was glad to find a respectable excuse for leaving the room, "to see after things."

Then came dinner, after which Lancelot had a little business to attend to, and, during the short remainder of that evening, the conversation was general. They all sat round the fire, while the newcomers related incidents of travel, Mrs. Colville, who was a great talker, commenting thereupon, and contributing various items of news on her own account, chiefly details about people Sylvia had never heard of before. Lancelot made a point of turning to her at intervals, as if to draw her into the circle of talk; he meant to be kind; she understood that; of course she had nothing to complain of, and she made occasional efforts to bear her part in the conversation; but it was so difficult to find anything to say—and her head ached—and she felt stupid.

In looking forward to her husband's homecoming, she had always fancied herself alone with him; she had composed various ingenious little speeches intended to make him understand that his absence had seemed dreary to her, that she was glad to see him again, and so forth; and she had planned to draw him out about his travels, to make him recount all he had seen, and to be such a good listener! The letter that informed her of Lancelot's invitation to his aunt to meet Bernard at Beverston had been rather a blow; but still she had never doubted that he would make opportunity for *some* private conversation. Apparently, however, nothing was further from his thoughts; and Sylvia felt cruelly wounded, forgetting that Lancelot had every reason to believe such private conversation would be even more unpleasant to her than to himself. She scrutinised his face, whenever she could do so unobserved. The hot climate, or the sea-breezes, had bronzed it, but that was not the only difference. It was difficult to believe this man was the same "good-natured boy," who had spilt the tea over her Sunday gown less than half a year ago! Bernard Colville must have noticed the direction taken by his hostess's eyes, for he turned to her and said:

"Lancelot's looking well, isn't he, Mrs. Bassett? I take most of the credit to myself for having inveigled him into getting some really respectable clothes."

And then followed a little cousinly nonsense about Bernard's personal vanity, and the difficulty Lancelot had found in dragging him out of New York shops.

Sylvia went upstairs that night, feeling dull and hopeless.

"It will always be the same; Mrs. Colville and Bernard will stay on here indefinitely, I feel sure: he'll keep pressing them to lengthen their visit; whenever he goes out walking or riding, Bernard will be his companion; I shall never have a chance of making myself nice to him."

But the new daylight, and the air of morning blowing in through the open window, brought her a renewed supply of courage, as usual. Lancelot had arrived safely at home, and that was something; and, when two people lived in the same house, there must be occasional chances of private talk; besides, she would not wait for such opportunities, she would force herself to take a lively part in general conversation; she would be a good hostess, would look her best, and do her best, and then, perhaps—some day—Sylvia did

not complete her sentence; she was not sure how much she could say to her husband, even under the most favourable circumstances.

It still wanted half an hour of breakfast-time when her toilet was finished; and what pleasanter way of filling up that interval than a stroll in the garden? Accordingly she went out, and lingered among the flower-beds that had not yet felt the harsh touch of winter, fancying all the time that Lancelot might see her from the window, and perhaps come and join her. She would begin by telling him how much she liked his house, and how charming she thought the garden; that surely could not fail to please him. The minutes passed slowly away, and at last a step on the gravel made her start; she would not turn round to see who it was; it approached nearer——

"It's close on breakfast-time, ma'am," said the voice of Emily, the parlour-maid; "I thought perhaps you didn't know how late it was," and Sylvia had to go in.

Her little plot had failed. But, as she passed through the hall, she beheld Lancelot coming downstairs.

"Out so early?" said he, greeting her in the same light manner which had jarred on her so painfully the evening before. "I believe Aunt Constance is down; shall we join her?"

And they entered the dining-room together. The fresh western breeze had ruffled Sylvia's hair becomingly, and had given an additional glow to her cheeks. Mrs. Colville gave an approving glance at the young couple.

Lancelot went out directly after breakfast, accompanied by Bernard; things were turning out precisely as Sylvia had predicted. Her own morning's airing was limited to a short constitutional with Mrs. Colville, after which, as it would not be polite (she thought) to leave her guest alone, she brought down her crewel-work, and spent the remainder of the long morning in matching threads for leaves or blossoms. It was delicious weather: just outside the open window at one end of the room, she could watch the graceful movements of a small birch, as the light breeze wafted the tiny leaves to and fro. Further away a wall of stately oaks rose against the pale blue and white of the sky. The sweet air and sunshine tantalised Sylvia in more ways than one; they conjured up foolish day-dreams, whose scene was laid in those pleasant leafy alleys; but she really must make an effort to attend to Mrs. Colville's talk, which, after a time, chanced to turn upon Lancelot. The lady prided herself on her analysis of character, and Lancelot Bassett's disposition was, in her opinion, a "unique" one. *Unique* was a favourite word with her; indeed, her acquaintance had apparently lain, to a remarkable degree, with persons "unique" in one way or another.

"I should be inclined to call his mind a very simple one, my dear, and yet there are so many inconsistent elements in him; he is a curious mixture——"

"But you said he was so simple."

"So you think you've caught me contradicting myself? I must explain more in detail, I see. Lancelot always knows exactly what he wants, and takes the shortest road to get it; and, in that sense, his nature is simple, do you not see, my dear?"

"Yes, I see what you mean."

"And when he gets an idea into his head, he does not easily let it go again. If, for instance, he forms a bad opinion of anybody, he is slow to alter it. Do you not think I am correct?"

"I dare say you are," said Sylvia, her countenance falling.

"But let us look at him now in a different light. His mind has so many sides, he takes interest in so many things, that he often comes out in ways that surprise one. I have noticed *that* in him ever since he was a child. If, for instance, he had been disappointed in love, it would not have affected him so painfully as it does other people, because he has so many other interests to fall back upon. Yes, I am sure he would have got over it very easily. What do you say, my dear?"

"I don't know."

"Why, here's a case in point! Most bridegrooms would have thought it hard to cut short their honeymoon and go straight off to America. But I really do not think it was such a giving up for Lancelot as it would have been for most. His mind is so flexible. Not that I underrate his kindness and yours, my dear, for which Bernard and I are most properly grateful."

Mrs. Colville's remarks had very decidedly rubbed Sylvia's temper the wrong way, and she said, rather wickedly, assuming an air of innocence:

"And on that account, I suppose, you felt the less hesitation in asking him?"

"Just so, my dear," said Mrs. Colville.

And the conversation drifted to more neutral ground, but it had left more than one sting behind it in the young wife's mind.

That was not an eventful day, and Sunday, which followed it, was, if possible, even more uneventful. But on Monday Sylvia ventured on a bold step. Late in the afternoon, Lancelot, who was looking over some accounts in the library, heard a gentle rap at the door.

"Come in," said he, a little crossly, for he was making an unsuccessful effort at disentangling a perplexed mass of figures.

"May I come in?" said a timid voice.

"Oh, certainly," said Lancelot, jumping up, with lightening face; "I didn't think it was you."

Sylvia advanced into the room.

"I wish I didn't feel so horribly afraid of him," she thought; "I could get on so much better. And it used not to be so."

"I won't interrupt you. I see you're busy. Only some of my writing things are here."

"I hope I haven't scattered them then; there's such an awful muddle in the room just now. I'll soon get things into some kind of order, I hope."

"*I* can't help you, can I?" asked Sylvia, wistfully.

Lancelot smiled.

"I'm afraid not. But never mind; I'll put these

accounts away for the present, and try to find what you want. Is it a desk, or what?"

"Only a small writing-case, and some copy-books—but don't trouble to search for them now; they don't matter in the least, really. I can do without them very well."

"I'll find them in two minutes."

And he began a vigorous overhauling of books and papers, many of which, being piled on chairs, slid down in small avalanches, when disturbed.

"Here they are," cried Sylvia, seizing on her manuscripts. "I've been trying, while you were away, to learn something about politics, and I wrote it down *here*," pointing to some childish-looking copy-books. "And there are my accounts; would you look at them, please?"

Lancelot found a chair for her, and turned over the pages on which Sylvia, with the most scrupulous care, had recorded each detail of the household expenses and sundries.

"I hope you won't think I've been very extravagant. Indeed, I tried to be careful; but things mounted up more than I expected, while my mother and the rest were here. I couldn't help it. I always consulted Mrs. Bell, and she said we must have this, that, and the other. It does look a large sum-total, I know," she ended, in deprecating tones.

"No, I don't think so at all," said Lancelot, glancing carelessly over the various items. "I hope Mrs. Hornby and your brothers and sisters had a pleasant time?"

"Yes, I'm sure they had—*very*," said Sylvia emphatically. "I have been wanting an opportunity to tell you how very, *very* grateful I am—how grateful we all are—for your great kindness and consideration. But I'm afraid the boys have battered the paint dreadfully, and broken some shrubs in the garden. I tried hard to keep them in order, but really it was impossible."

"Paint's made to be battered, I suppose; but look here, Sylvia, I see no mention of the excursions you were to arrange."

Sylvia coloured.

"No, I thought coming here was quite pleasure enough in itself for the children; they had all the beautiful garden to play in. *Indeed*, I'm sure they wanted nothing more at all."

"But I'm sorry you had no excursions. Why didn't you take them to Falkbourne and Wheathill Castle?"

"Oh, I thought there was no occasion."

"But you are so fond of going about; at least you used to be. Come, Sylvia, I want to get to the bottom of this. Why didn't you carry out my plans?"

She hesitated.

"I didn't want to spend the money."

"I was afraid that might be the reason. You ought not to have felt like that. You won't any more, will you?"

"Yes, I shall," said Sylvia, in a low voice; "always."

"That's absurd. Did you ever hear of any other wife having such an idea?"

"Perhaps no one else has the same cause."

"It will be very uncomfortable," thought Lancelot, "if she persists in this kind of thing; it will keep up a perpetual friction in her mind. I can't let this pass. I must persuade her out of it." So he said aloud—

"Sylvia, you have no right to talk like this. You know perfectly well I wish you to feel that everything we have is as much yours as mine. Now, do you understand?"

"Yes."

"And we'll have no more of this foolishness, will we?"

Sylvia remained silent.

"Come, promise."

Still Sylvia sat silent. Lancelot looked at her expectantly.

"Sylvia!"

Gravely she raised her eyes.

"I'm waiting for you to promise."

"I can't promise. You might understand that I *can't*."

"Yes, you can, when you know I wish to have it so."

Thus driven to bay, Sylvia burst out vehemently—

"You said I had *sold* myself, and it was true—partly true, at least—though—though—well, anyhow, I'm not so bad as you think me, and I won't let you think me mercenary any more, if I can help it."

"I don't think you mercenary, and I never did; you're turning my words the wrong way."

"No," said Sylvia, steadfastly. "I know your opinion of me. It's unjust, but you'll always go on believing it, I know."

"What *do* you mean, child?"

Sylvia's voice broke into sobs:

"You'll—always—think—evil—of me. Mrs. Colville says that's—your—nature!"

"Mrs. Colville says it's my nature always to think evil of you?"

"No; but she says—if once—you get a—bad opinion of—anybody, you——"

Here the library door opened and Bernard entered. Sylvia turned round hastily, pretending to be looking for a book in the shelves, and seized the first opportunity of effecting a retreat.

"She's never forgotten that unlucky speech of mine," thought Lancelot. "I've done what I could. I've done whatever I thought would please her. But as soon as we met last Friday, I saw she was still nursing resentment, and she has hardly spoken to me of her own accord since I got home; if she has anything to say, she always says it to Aunt Constance or Bernard, never to me."

Our hero had no conception of the insuperable dilemma which presented itself to Sylvia, whenever she wished to address him; she could not well call her husband Mr. Bassett, nor could she call the man who had ceased to love her Lancelot; it was therefore

impossible to speak to him, unless she chanced to catch his eye.

Bernard Colville, being a person of quick perceptions, had already noticed the constrained relations between husband and wife, but on this occasion it was plain that something like an open quarrel must have taken place. The only theory on the subject which occurred to him was that Sylvia must have resented her husband's desertion, and he felt just a shade conscience-stricken.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

CROSS QUESTIONS AND CROOKED ANSWERS.

After dinner that evening, Bernard challenged Lancelot to a game at chess, and Mrs. Colville constituted herself the candid adviser of both combatants. Sylvia had leisure to think her own thoughts undisturbed, and, ensconcing herself in a nook of the drawing-room, at some distance from the fire, seemingly intent on the tea-cloth she was embroidering, she reflected despondently enough on the posture of affairs.

"It was too hard that we should be interrupted this afternoon, the first chance I've ever had of speaking to him alone. I wish these people would go away. But, after all, I don't suppose their presence makes any real difference. He doesn't *want* to talk to me now. Mrs. Colville was right; he'll never alter his bad opinion of me. Nothing I can do will be of the smallest use. He took no notice this afternoon when I showed him those note-books—and I thought they would have pleased him: I did take such pains; I meant to prove that I had been thinking of him, and trying to do what he would like. But it was no good; nothing's any good."

She took up a book at last, to distract her thoughts, a volume of Browning, and laid it open on the table, with an idea of combining reading and needlework, which resulted in the slow progress of both. When the game was over, Lancelot got up, and stood with his back to the fire, as though contemplating a move. Sylvia's pulses beat fast as she saw him glance in her direction; but Bernard, who did not inherit his mother's capacity for unlimited talk, had picked up a newspaper, and Mrs. Colville concentrated her forces on the one remaining listener.

"By the way, Lancelot, do you remember the Aldridges? I have such a sad tale to tell you about them."

Sylvia's heart sank down again; it was hard work to keep the hot tears from welling over. She tried to fix her attention on Browning; the book lay open at "A Serenade at the Villa."

> "Earth turned in her sleep with pain,
> Sultrily suspired for proof:
> In at heaven and out again,
> Lightning! Where it broke the roof,
> Bloodlike, some few drops of rain."

Over and over her eyes followed the lines, without taking in their meaning; Mrs. Colville went on talking:

"They were such a handsome couple when they first married, and so fond of each other; Lilian, you may recollect, was one of those rare brunettes with dark hair and blue eyes; and *he* was good-looking enough, though he had not Lilian's air of distinction. Well, they had not been married long when we began to hear that he drank more than was good for him; he was one of those people, it seems, who, when they take ever so little too much, lose their senses altogether. Poor Lilian often went in fear of her life, they say. And at last, I suppose, she could bear it no longer, for I heard, the other day, that she had left him, and gone to live with one of her brothers. Is it not sad when a marriage ends like that?"

"Very," said Lancelot, laconically.

"Now I want you to give me your honest opinion. Has Lilian acted rightly in leaving her husband, or ought she to have stayed, and done her best to reform him?"

Mrs. Colville was fond of propounding problems in casuistry.

"I couldn't say in the least, without knowing the circumstances of the case."

"Have I not just told you those circumstances?"

"Without knowing a great deal more of the circumstances, I mean."

Lancelot did not perhaps foresee that his diplomatic reply would launch his aunt on a lengthy disquisition anent the matrimonial troubles of Mr. and Mrs. Aldridge—a disquisition in which a few facts were intermixed with a large number of conjectures.

"And now for your opinion," she concluded, turning her eyes expectantly on Lancelot.

"I suppose all love must be gone by this time, and all respect too; and they say, when love is once dead, it never revives; but, after all, she took him for better, for worse, you know——"

"When love is once dead, it never revives." Those words rang like a death-sentence in Sylvia's ears. While he talked of Lilian Aldridge, he doubtless had another case in his mind; it must be his own experience which made him so sure that dead love could have no resurrection. How hot the room was! the air felt stifling. If only she dared open a window! but perhaps Mrs. Colville might be afraid of the draught, and she could not trust her voice to ask the question. Her eyes rested again on the page she had been reading:

> "Earth turned in her sleep with pain,
> Sultrily suspired for proof——

She should know the lines by heart very soon; they expressed and emphasised the hot tearless pain that throbbed through her every nerve. At last the physical and mental oppression became more than could be borne; she got up suddenly and left the room. Straight into the outer air she went. All was silent except the sighing of the wind in the trees. Without stopping to put on a hat or shawl, she closed the front door behind her as gently as possible, and rushed down the garden walk, for bodily exertion—rapid movement—were the only anodynes for her pain she could conceive of. The October breeze blew cool

upon her face; this was at least better than sitting still in that oven of a drawing-room.

Sylvia fancied she had effected her escape unobserved; she knew not that Bernard Colville had been watching her some time from behind his newspaper, with not unkindly curiosity. When a few minutes had gone by, he observed to Lancelot in a careless tone:

"I'm afraid Mrs. Bassett's not feeling well. This room's overpoweringly hot; and I suppose she must have found it so, for I think I heard her go out into the garden."

Meanwhile, Sylvia had rushed on without pausing till she reached the bottom of the walled fruit-garden, which was further from the house than any other part of the grounds, and was sitting on a low wall, rocking to and fro in an abandonment of grief. She kept reminding herself that she ought to realise the truth, that the man she had married would never care for her again. Having taken her "for better, for worse," he doubtless intended to be generous and indulgent, but she could never be anything but a burden and a misery to him. It was impossible to persist in forcing her presence upon Lancelot; she *must* go home to her mother, she *must* refuse to accept anything further at his hands, must go out into the world, and work hard at something, anything—to deaden the sharp pain at her heart, and also to help her mother. Then

"SYLVIA WAS ASLEEP" (*p.* 226).

the tears came, relieving somewhat the tension of grief, and she was beginning to think she ought to go back into the house, when someone lifted the latch of the door in the garden wall. She held her breath, and listened—it was too dark to see—and heard steps coming down the walk; it might be Lancelot himself, and how humiliating to be found there, crying, at that hour of the night! She dared not attempt flight, but if she remained perfectly still, very likely he would pass her by unnoticed; so she shrank down behind the big lavender bushes.

"Sylvia!—Sylvia! Are you here?"

Sylvia felt a pang of "sweet pain," if such a thing can be; for the tender intonations of that well-known voice recalled the far-away time when Lancelot still loved her, and his love was a weariness to her—recalled the past so forcibly, indeed, that her tears rushed forth again, and she was obliged to set her teeth, and clench her hands together, to prevent herself from sobbing aloud. The steps passed by to the other side of the garden; she started up and ran for dear life towards the same little door by which her husband had entered. She must have made more noise than she intended, for, as she closed it behind her, she heard Lancelot call her name once more, and, this time, much louder. She had a good start, however, and ran straight towards the house; but she could not run so fast as he could; she caught her gown among some shrubs which had tempted her to try a short cut, and, before she could disentangle it, found herself a prisoner.

"You can't escape, you see; I traced you here by the gleam of your white dress," said he triumphantly.

Sylvia stood still, covered with confusion.

"It was so hot in the house," said she, in a voice that tried to sound careless; "and I thought I would come out for a little fresh air."

"Aunt Constance is not fond of what she calls 'draughts,'" said Lancelot, aiding her to disengage her draperies.

"Shall we go back to the house?"

Lancelot perceived the trembling in her voice.

"Let's walk round the garden, and cool ourselves, before we go in."

They went on side by side for a few minutes without speaking, and, all through the rest of life, the smell of laurels will remind Sylvia of that walk.

"Sylvia," said her husband, suddenly, "I've been thinking about what you said this afternoon, and I want you to put these fancies out of your head. Never mind what Aunt Constance said about me—I expect it was some trifling remark that meant nothing at all—and you know me better than she does, Sylvia."

Sylvia did not answer immediately. Now was the time to tell him of her resolution.

"There's something I want to say to you," she began at last in a very low voice, unconsciously toying with the two rings on her fourth finger of her left hand.

"Tell me what it is, then."

"You've no idea how miserable I am," she said passionately. "And it grows worse every day. I don't quite know how to make you understand it——" she paused.

"Poor child! I'm afraid I understand too well. You've made a great mistake. I can't release you from it; but I wish I knew what I could do to make it weigh less heavily on you. I would do anything in my power—if I only knew what was best to do."

"No," said poor Sylvia mournfully; "you don't understand how I feel."

"I suppose I can't exactly enter into it; but that makes me none the less anxious to do what I can to atone for my share of the mistake. Now, what *can* I do?"

"I am much obliged to you, but I can't bear this sort of thing any longer. I'd rather work for my bread. And I've quite made up my mind to go back to mother, as soon as you are willing, and try to get something to do. Other women find ways and means of earning their living, and I've no doubt I can, if I try—I mean to try, anyhow."

"Sylvia!"

"Please don't raise objections. I know it will be an immense relief to you—only perhaps you'll think it doesn't look well, or that it isn't right, or something. But anything must be better than going on so miserably as we do now. And I haven't the smallest right to be taking your money for my family."

"I can't bear to hear you talk like that; I'm sure you don't mean half you say. Of course you know perfectly well that what you said about me just now is entirely false."

"No," said she, in low, resolute tones, "I know it's true!"

"That I want to get rid of you!"

"Oh, you've been very good and generous, I feel that. I do indeed. But you don't care for me now—you despise me!"

"Don't talk like that, Sylvia!"

Lancelot had no comprehension of what was in her mind, and therefore felt baffled by her vehemence.

"And I heard you say to Mrs. Colville that when love was once dead—those were your very words—it never revived. And so I thought—so I came out here, and I thought I wouldn't stay at Beverston and make you miserable any longer."

"Was that what made you come out into the garden?"

"Well, partly."

"But I wasn't talking of myself or you. I was speaking of some friends of Aunt Constance. You misunderstood."

"Oh, of course I know you were not speaking of yourself or me. But it holds true all the same. And it does seem so mean to go on using your money."

"Oh, *money!*" said Lancelot, impatiently; "don't mention that again, unless you want to make me very angry. But just tell me honestly—would you prefer for your own happiness, all things considered, to live apart from me?"

Sylvia hesitated. That was not an easy question to answer.

"I *have* told you how I feel about it."

"Shall we wait till to-morrow, and talk over the matter calmly?"

Sylvia shivered. They had been standing still, and the wind blew chill through her thin, white dress.

"You're cold," said Lancelot; "we mustn't stay out here any longer. You ought to have had a shawl. Perhaps," he added, as they moved towards the house, "you had rather go upstairs, instead of returning to the drawing-room? I can make your apologies."

"Oh, that's just what I should like, only I'm so cold, or else I should be very glad to go to bed."

"Have you no fire in your own room?"

"No, I don't care at all about a fire, thank you."

"Oh, but you do. You've been complaining of cold this very moment. Why haven't you ordered a fire for yourself as well as for other people?"

Sylvia hesitated, and then said boldly:

"I should think you might understand by this time that I don't want to spend more than I can help on luxuries for myself."

Lancelot bit his lip without speaking.

"Come to the library, then. There was a good fire there a short time ago."

She followed him into the library accordingly, where, with a little coaxing, the coals blazed up cheerily enough. He drew an arm-chair in front of the warm hearth.

"Sit there and get warm; I must go and try to be civil to our guests."

He lingered a moment at the door, said good-night, and disappeared. Sylvia sat on still by the fire, gazing into the flames; her thoughts wandered hither and thither, refusing to be controlled, till, at last, laying down her head on the arm of the chair, she fell fast asleep, lulled by the comforting warmth, and drowsy with the very weariness of sorrow. The clock struck ten, and then eleven, without waking her. But now it chanced that Lancelot, after bidding adieu to his guests at the top of the stairs, noticed Sylvia's bedroom door standing wide open; she was still downstairs, then, or was it possible that she had carried out her threat, and fled without further warning? A sudden terror seized him, and he looked into the room. No signs of packing were visible, and there lay all her dear little belongings as she had left them when she hurried down to dinner; it seemed to Lancelot like a holy place, and, if he had had his hat on, he would have taken it off as instinctively as on entering a church. Upon the bed lay the lavender silk, his first gift; poor Sylvia had put it on that evening with a sort of idea that the sight of it might touch her husband's heart, and then the reflection of her own figure in the glass had brought back so vividly the afternoon at Porlock that she had taken it off again. And on the dressing-table was a small heap of letters. Lancelot did not want to pry, but the room was blazing with the light of the big fire he had privately instructed Ruth, the housemaid, to kindle, and he could not help seeing that they were in his own handwriting. A wild hope rose in his mind; was it possible that Sylvia valued, that she treasured, these studiously unsentimental productions of his? It looked like it; but no, of course, it was absurd to imagine such a thing. Yet, in spite of philosophy, it was with a beating heart that our hero hurried down to the library, opened the door, which was but standing ajar, and then, perceiving that Sylvia was asleep, sat down on the other side of the fire, and watched her. Her cheek rested on her hand; the yellow hair which had been tossed by the autumn breeze, was in picturesque confusion; her face wore the pathetic expression left by recent tears.

"What a good face it is!" thought he; "how gentle and peaceful she looks. If I could but make her love me! I'm almost afraid I made a great mistake in going to America."

And so time went by. The fire burned low, and he put on a few lumps of coal, but so softly that she never stirred. He, too, lay back in his chair, seeing visions with wide-open eyes, castles in the air, pathetic pictures of what might have been. On the table, close beside him, lay Sylvia's poor little note-books; after a while he picked up one which contained a kind of abstract of the contents of one of his own blue-books. The *naïveté* of the style made him smile, as he turned over page after page; it evidently embodied the result of not a little study.

"I didn't know she really cared much about these things," said he to himself wonderingly. "This must have cost her a deal of labour—and it's not ill-condensed either. I remember she told me this afternoon she had been reading politics while I was away. I wonder what put the idea into her head. Perhaps she wanted to please me—poor child! I'm sorry I took no notice of it, but what she said afterwards made me forget all about the politics!"

Sylvia moved at last, opened her eyes, and started up.

"Why, what a long time I must have been asleep!" She looked at the clock on the chimney-piece; "it's one o'clock, and you've been sitting up for me! Has everybody else gone to bed?"

"Yes, everybody."

"Oh, I'm very sorry to have kept you up."

"You needn't be sorry—I'm not sleepy. I haven't wanted to go to bed. And I hope you won't think I've been taking a liberty, but I've been reading this," touching the note-book.

"Have you?"

"Yes, and your notes have interested me greatly. I think they're very well done. What made you think of studying these matters, Sylvia?" added he, looking at her with a smile.

"I knew that you took an interest in politics, and so I thought I would try to learn something about them."

"You took all this trouble to please me? That was very good of you, Sylvia."

"Oughtn't people to try to please their husbands?" said she, flushing with pleasure.

"They ought, but people don't always do what they ought." He paused, "And men ought to try to please their wives. But I don't know how to please you" (he had suddenly become grave again), "except by letting

you go away from me altogether; is that really the *only* way I can please you, Sylvia?"

Something in Lancelot's voice—an indefinable something in his manner—carried to Sylvia's mind the sweet and sudden conviction that he loved her still. So strong was the revulsion of feeling that she did not answer immediately; in fact, she could think of no response except: "I don't know." Lancelot repeated his question.

"Couldn't I please you in any other way than that, Sylvia?"

Then (she could never understand how or why) a mischievous spirit of contradiction took possession of her, and in very joy and lightness of heart she yielded to it. She wanted to hear what Lancelot would say; she was tempted once more to try the power which she had thought was lost.

"You remember what I said this evening in the garden, don't you?"

Her husband's countenance darkened.

"I *can't* believe you really mean it?"

"Why not?"

"Because it's so cruel—so hard. Oh, Sylvia, while you lay there asleep, I watched your face, and it looked so sweet that I couldn't help hoping perhaps some day—but never mind what I thought. I was a fool!"

He paced up and down the room with his hands behind his back. His words were more intoxicating than wine to Sylvia, but there seemed to be an evil spell upon the foolish girl, impelling her to tempt his patience to the uttermost. For two contrary desires strove together within her, one urging her to torment, the other to comfort, and the wicked one carried the day. Suddenly he stopped in his walk, came up, and stood in front of her.

"Well. Be it so. I won't keep you, if you don't want to stay. But, mind, I won't have my wife going about the world working for her living; in common decency, I won't allow that. We'll have a separation, if you choose; but you must let me allow you a proper income."

"And pray, how much would you consider a proper income?" said Sylvia.

She hated herself as she spoke, but it seemed as if something forced her to go on upon the road she had entered. Just a few moments more of this acting, and she would alter her tone, she would allow him to understand what a change had come over her since that day at Porlock. Lancelot stared at her in blank astonishment. He had once charged her with "selling herself," but, in spite of the hard word he had used, he had never doubted the real goodness and truth of the girl's nature. This question suddenly presented her in a new light. Was it possible that, after all, she could be the low-minded woman she had accused him of thinking her? He turned giddy, with a sense as of sickening pain.

"Sylvia," he faltered, scarcely knowing what he said; "I didn't think you cared for money in that way!"

"I suppose everybody likes money; I don't know that I'm worse than other people. You haven't answered my question."

"I haven't had time to think about it yet," he replied, in a tone unlike anything Sylvia had ever heard before. "We'll discuss these details some other time, if you please. Now I think you had better go to bed, hadn't you?"

She stood up, irresolute. Should she speak now? What should she say? Meanwhile he lighted a candle, put it into her hand, and, without waiting for her to speak again, went out of the room; the next moment she heard him open the hall-door and go out into the darkness. She dared not follow him and yet was too frightened and miserable to go to bed.

"Oh, what have I done? What *did* I mean by talking like that? How can I possibly make him understand it was pure nonsense? It will be harder now than ever to tell him that I——Oh! I don't know how it is, but I didn't find it half so hard to ask him to marry me! Never mind; I won't care how difficult it is. I'll not think about it; I'll harden my heart, and the moment he comes in, I'll beg his forgiveness. I'll make him understand *somehow* that I do care for his love now!"

Slowly, very slowly, time passed by—and at last the hall-door opened once more. The girl's heart almost stood still; the time was come; she would not flinch. And then she heard him go upstairs, without so much as looking into the library; she could not tell whether or no he knew that she was still waiting there; but the sharp pang of disappointment gave place to cold fear, as she too crept up to her own room.

She was downstairs long before anyone else next morning, hoping to get speech of her husband before the Colvilles appeared. But he was the last person to enter the dining-room; so, all through breakfast, Sylvia had to feign a cheerful countenance, and counterfeit a polite interest in the various topics started by Aunt Constance or Bernard. Lancelot kept his eyes steadily averted; once only did he catch her inquiring glance, and then he returned it by an icy look, which seemed to say:

"I've found you out now for what you are, madam. We understand each other perfectly."

When they rose from table, Sylvia—determined to grasp her nettle this time—walked straight up to her husband and said:

"I want to speak to you, please; would you mind coming out into the garden with me?"

She felt as if her task would be easier under the open heaven than in the room charged with the guilty memory of last night. Lancelot, looking a little surprised, took his hat, and followed her down the bosky walk leading towards the fruit-garden. The moment they were out of sight of the house, Sylvia turned to him, trembling in spite of herself, but resolved to get the first word.

"I want to tell you that I didn't mean what I said last night."

She looked him straight in the face as she made this abrupt beginning.

"May I understand," said he coldly, "what part of the conversation you wish to withdraw?"

His tone did not make it easier for Sylvia to say the rest of what she wanted to say, but she could not afford to let this chance slip.

"I was only talking nonsense—indeed I was. I didn't mean it a bit—indeed I didn't. I can't think what made me say that horrid thing. I hated myself for it. I think it was just that I wanted—well, I suppose, I wanted to see what you would say!"

Lancelot looked at her in silence.

"She sees she has made a false move," he thought; "she is trying to retreat. But it's too late; she's given me too plain a glimpse of her motives. First, she married me for my money, and next, she wants to have the money without the troublesome husband!—And she looks so young and so true!—But I won't let her befool me again. I suppose it's nearly impossible for a man to know what a woman really is. Whatever she may say now, I'll harden myself like stone."

Sylvia gazed at him with growing fear.

"Don't you understand me?"

"Yes, I believe I do. You wish to live apart from me, and you asked last night what income I would allow you. Is it *that* question which you now want to withdraw?"

"Yes. At least—I don't wish to go away at all."

"Why did you make the proposal then?"

"Because—well, at first I made it because I thought it would be a relief to you."

Lancelot interrupted her. "Oh, don't talk such absurd nonsense. Just tell me the plain truth. I'd rather hear *that*, however uncomplimentary it may be."

Sylvia's spirit rose.

"I *am* telling the truth. I never told you anything that wasn't true. Never, Lancelot."

It was the first time she had called him so, though in the heat of the moment she was not even aware that she used his baptismal name.

"I'm glad to hear it," said he, bitterly.

"If you don't believe what I say, it's no use talking any more."

"I beg your pardon. I have no wish to hurt your feelings. But, as you say, there's little use in talking. We had better make our arrangements for the future without delay. I propose to allow you a thousand a year—half my income; is that satisfactory to you?"

"But I said—I didn't really mean what I said last night—I don't want to go away from you, unless *you* wish it."

"I do wish it."

Poor Sylvia turned white as ashes.

"But yesterday I thought you seemed to—to want me to stay here."

"But yesterday I didn't know something which I do know to-day."

"Something about me?"

"Oh, nothing but what you've known perfectly all along."

"Indeed, I don't understand—at least, I'm not sure what you mean."

"Aren't you? Well, it's hardly worth while discussing motives. We'd better stick to business. I want to know whether you are content with the sum of money I mentioned just now?"

"No," said Sylvia, with fierce emphasis. "I'll never take one penny from you. Never!"

"Oh, don't talk like that!" said Lancelot, impatiently. "It's quite unnecessary to act this disinterested high-minded part any more. I wonder you don't know me well enough to understand that you can get no more out of me by crooked ways than straight ones. Come, tell me what you think I ought to do for you? Don't let us chaffer about it."

Sylvia drew herself to her full height.

"Lancelot Bassett," she said, "you're not the kind of man I took you for. How can you insult me like this?"

"I don't want to insult you. I want to meet your wishes."

"You think I'm trying to deceive you—to get things from you. I never deceived you intentionally—never—till last night, and, really and truly, that was only nonsense; I asked you that horrid question because I was very silly, and very happy——"

"Very happy, Sylvia?"

"Yes, I *was* very happy because you had said something which showed me—which made me think, I mean——"

She hesitated.

"Which made you think—what?"

"When you first came home," she went on, with a desperate effort, "I thought you had quite left off caring about me; and last night I thought perhaps it wasn't so."

Lancelot was altogether puzzled. He knew not what to make of Sylvia's very confused sentences, but he was determined to get to the bottom of the matter. Was it possible, after all, that there might be some explanation, some escape from the horrible suspicions which had been hardening his heart and poisoning the very springs of his life for the last eight hours, the suspicions which he had fiercely declared to be certainties? He felt his brain reeling under the sharp alternations of hope and mortal doubt, and yet it was a moment when, above all things, it behoved him to keep his judgment cool.

Sylvia was making a great effort to restrain her tears, and, perceiving her emotion, Lancelot spoke more gently.

"I can't understand what you mean, Sylvia. I'm utterly lost. Can't you tell a plain story? I don't want to hurt your feelings, and I've no doubt you have some meaning, if I could only get at it, but really what you say sounds to me like an extraordinary farrago of nonsense."

"You disbelieve me. It's my own fault: I know it's my own fault—my own foolishness—but I don't see any way of convincing you that I'm speaking the truth."

"Oh, Sylvia!" cried he, passionately, "I don't

"SHE CLIMBED THE PRECIPITOUS SLOPE" (*p.* 230).

know what to think. First you say one thing—and then another: how am I to know which to believe? Of course, it's worse than death to think you anything else than the true-hearted woman I always believed you. Come here, and let me look into your eyes."

Her eyes neither fell nor flinched before his scrutiny: yet he read something there which puzzled him, an uneasy consciousness of some kind, a shyness, which he had never seen in former days on Sylvia's very frank face.

"You're quite changed," said he, almost with a groan. "I can't tell what to make of you. You're not the old Sylvia any more."

"Ask me any questions you like, and I'll answer you," said she, resolutely.

"You found out I loved you, and therefore you said you would go away and leave me? Make sense of that."

"I was so happy that I wanted to tease you."

"I thought my love was nothing but a trouble and a burden to you," said Lancelot quickly, fixing his eyes on her face with eager fear and hope.

"I've been very sorry ever since, for the things I said on the day we were married," said she, looking down.

"Sylvia! Were you glad or sorry when I came home on Friday?"

"I was glad."

"Do you want to get rid of me again?"

"Not unless you want to be rid of me, because you think me so horrid."

"Oh, my dear love, I don't think you horrid. It was all a mistake. I misunderstood you. But there's another question I want to ask. I hope it won't vex you, for I *must* ask it. Can you guess what it is, Sylvia?"

"I don't know what it is, but I'll answer it," said she bravely. Perhaps, in saying this, she was not quite so candid as she boasted of being.

"Do you think that some day—if I begged you for a little love—a very little, Sylvia—you could give it me? Mind, I only say some time—and a very little love would content me—at first—because I'm used to having none, you know. Oh, Sylvia, I wonder whether you'll return the same sort of answer you did at Porlock?"

"I don't know—yes, I do know," she faltered.

"Just tell me the truth; never mind hurting my feelings."

"Oh, it's not that."

"What is it then?"

"I thought you couldn't love me any more, because I'd behaved so badly to you. Please forgive me."

She put out her hand timidly and just touched his, which was resting on a tree-bough. He lifted it up, it was the left hand. Touching the wedding-ring he said:

"If that ring was not there, should you be willing to have me put it on again?"

"Yes, I should," said she boldly.

"Only for the same reasons that made you consent before?"

"No. Not only for those reasons."

"Then you *have* a grain of love for me?"

Sylvia gave just the slightest pressure to the hand in which her own still lay. It was easier than speaking.

"Shall we go down into the wood?" said Lancelot abruptly.

A light breeze stirred the boughs above their heads; the blackbirds were singing, everything in the garden breathed the cheerfulness of a fine autumn morning. They walked on in the sunshine without speaking, till they reached the walled garden.

"Where were you hiding yourself yesterday evening?" asked Lancelot, as he opened the door.

"Down there!" said Sylvia, pointing to the lavender bushes beside the low wall, that divided the garden from the wood below.

"Why did you run away from me?"

"I don't quite know. I didn't want you to find me out here in the dark."

"Then you're afraid of me, Sylvia? You weren't afraid in the old times, were you?"

"I can't help being afraid. You don't seem at all like you used to be."

"Have I changed for the better or the worse?"

"I don't know, perhaps it's I myself that have changed."

They passed on, through the gate at the further end of the garden, into the glen, where a moss-grown walk wound in and out among wood, first on one side of the streamlet, then on the other. They did not appear to have much to say to each other. No one would have taken them for lovers, who, "after long trouble and pain," had just come to an understanding.

"We used to come down here on summer evenings long ago, mother and I," said Lancelot. "I've not been here very often since."

This allusion touched Sylvia's heart, overflowing as it was with emotions which she knew not how to express. But she merely answered, after a little pause:

"It's a lovely place."

Again there was silence, except for the babbling of the streamlet over its stones.

"I've had no one to make much of me since she died, Sylvia!"

It seemed cruel not to return a sympathetic reply, but the only words which suggested themselves—"I'm very sorry,"—were evidently not quite the answer desired. It was impossible to blurt out:

"Yes, Lancelot, you have *me!*"

If he wanted her to say something affectionate, why did he not make it easier for her? It was not fair to expect her to do all the love-making. And he was so cold—so unlike the old Winston days. She remembered her dream at Lynton; it had come true, after a fashion; they had made up their differences; they were walking side by side under green woods, by rushing waters. But the magical glory of love—the thrilling sense of tenderness and passion, that had made the walk in dreamland so sweet—was wanting here. The dream had been poetry, the reality was prose. Nor was it difficult to understand the reason; it was her own cruelty which had extinguished the ardour of long ago; and she ought to be thankful enough to find a little warmth yet remaining in the embers, just enough, perhaps, to keep the domestic hearth alight!

Sylvia longed for any excuse to vary the monotony, the awkward constraint of the situation, and, perceiving some splendid ferns that fringed the steep side of the ravine, almost out of reach, she pointed them out to Lancelot.

"Let me pick them for you."

"No, thank you, you wouldn't know how to choose the right ones; I'd rather get them myself."

She climbed the precipitous slope with some little pride in her own agility; but, in coming down again, with a big armful of the majestic green fronds, her foot slipped on a rock, and she would have fallen ingloriously, if her husband had not caught her in his arms. He held her fast.

"Sylvia," he whispered, "are you angry with me?"

"What for?—for saving me from a fall?"

"For holding you in my arms."

"I'm much obliged to you for catching me," returned Sylvia, evasively.

"But you know very well that's not what I mean. Are you wishing me to let you go again?"

"Why does he persist," thought Sylvia, "in putting things in such an awkward, uncomfortable way? Whether I answer Yes or No, it will sound equally stupid."

He released her, and stepped back a few paces.

"You remember saying it turned you sick to have me touch you?"

"Yes, I remember. I spoke shamefully, I know," said she, looking down.

"And I vowed to myself I would never so much as take your hand again in the way of love, unless you asked me to."

He looked at her inquiringly.

"He knows very little about me," thought Sylvia; "if he imagines I'll ever do that. I *couldn't* ask him to give me a kiss—no, not if my life depended on it!"

And the tears started to her eyes.

"What's the matter, dear?" said Lancelot. "Please tell me."

"Oh, no, I can't. It's very silly of me to cry, I know—but I can't help it."

"Have I offended you?"

"Oh, no—at least—I wish you wouldn't ask me such questions."

"I didn't ask you any questions that I know of, Sylvia. Please forgive me, dear; I didn't mean to hurt you."

"Oh, I know it's wrong and babyish to cry," sobbed poor Sylvia, "but I can't help it. Perhaps it is because I lay awake last night—I was so very miserable."

We fear our hero showed a lamentable want of proper pride; or perhaps he forgot his vow; for he kissed the tears that were running down Sylvia's cheeks, without being requested to do so.

"Oh my darling!" he said, "give me one kiss; and then I shall be quite sure that the hateful miserable past is dead and gone, and that you have forgiven me everything!"

"I have nothing to forgive; it is you who must forgive," faltered she. And, with a burning blush, she lightly touched his cheek.

He held her by both hands, and looked into her face.

"Oh, but you haven't given me enough to satisfy me yet! That's not the real thing. I shall never believe you love me, until you kiss my lips; and then I need never remember that bitter past any more."

Sylvia stood irresolute.

"I don't know how to. You don't make it easy for me."

Letting go her hands, he clasped her in his arms, and drew her to him.

"Oh, Sylvia, if you only knew how I love you! if you only knew how I hungered and thirsted for the sight of you, for the touch of you, all those long months that I was in America, how I counted the days and the miles that parted me from you! How I contrived and plotted what I should do to win you, when I came home again!"

"And I thought you didn't seem one bit glad to see me!"

"Oh, Sylvia, that was my deep art. I didn't think it was policy to show what I felt. If I had, I'm afraid I should have made a fool of myself before Bernard, and Aunt Constance, and the servants and all!"

"Then you *were* glad to see me again?" said Sylvia, softly.

"*Glad* is not the word, my darling! I can't find a comparison, because I don't know where to find anything great enough to match love with—except comparisons which perhaps it would be wrong to use. And then, Sylvia, your coldness went to my heart like a knife!"

"If you'd only known! Oh, I was *so* miserable! I thought you'd left off loving me!"

* * * * * *

"Lancelot," said Sylvia, "did you think—on *that* day—you would ever make me love you?"

"At the first moment, I gave up all for lost; but, after a while, I began to pluck up heart again, and, when I left you alone at the 'Ship,' that evening, I thought over things, and promised myself I would win you yet; only I saw I should have to go rather a different way about it."

"So you tried leaving me severely to myself?"

"Well, that's one way of putting it. But I think I've a right to ask *you* a question now. How soon did you begin to feel your dislike for me cooling?"

"Oh, Lancelot, what a way to put it!"

"Come, tell me."

"It sounds so silly that you won't believe it; but you remember those honeymoon people in Lynton woods? I dreamed that night that you and I were friends, and walking in the same woods—just like them, you know?"

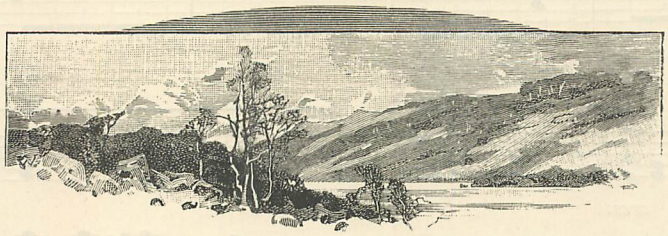
"Yes, my darling; and then?"

"And since that, I don't know how it was, but——"

"But—— I want you to finish that sentence, Sylvia!"

"Since that, I've loved you all the time, Lancelot!"

THE END.



Day-Dreams.

(*For the Pianoforte.*)

WILLIAM H. HUNT, D. Mus. (Lond.), L. Mus., T.C.L.

Moderato (♩=96).

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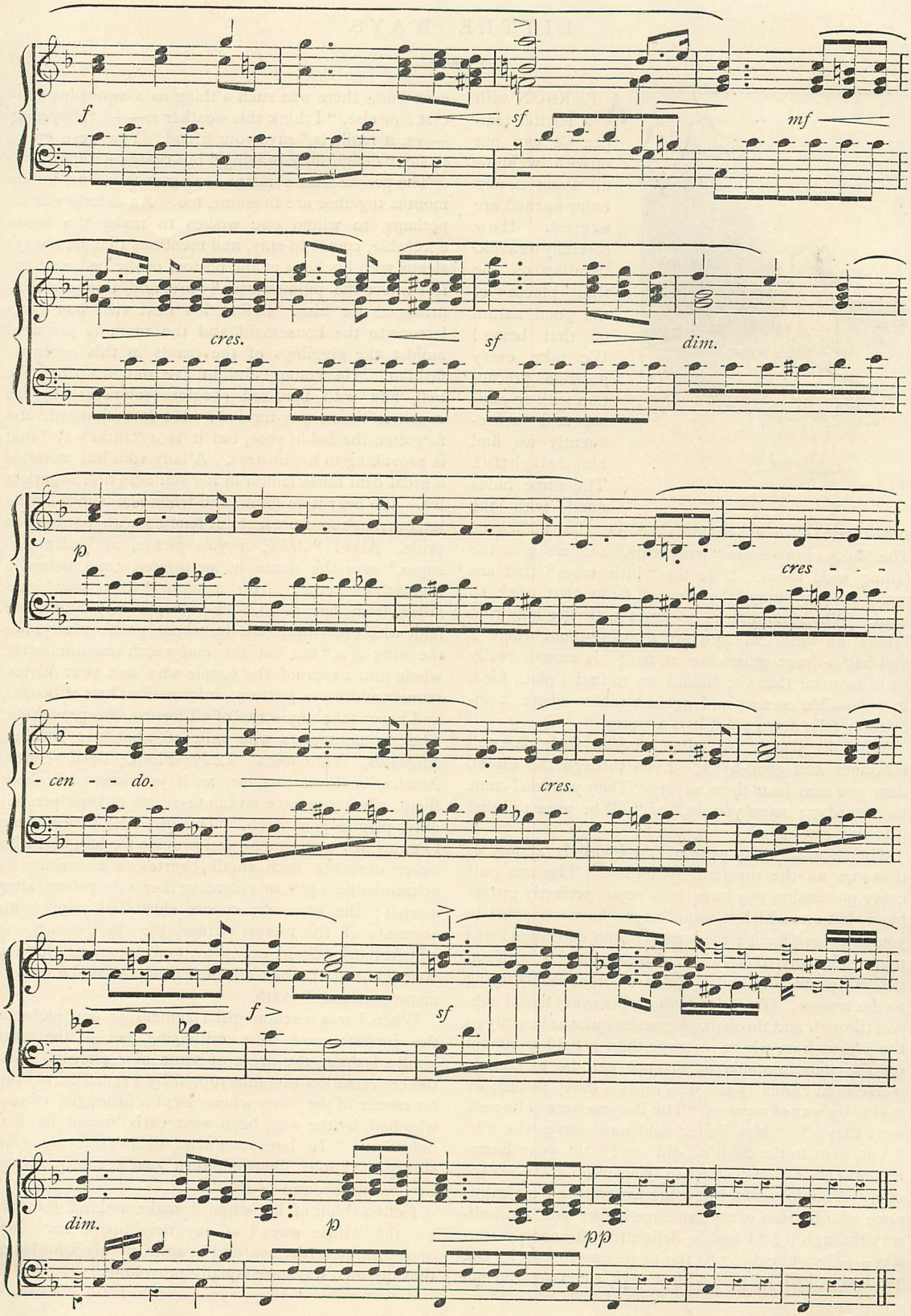
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LITTLE WAYS.

A PERSON with a terrible temper we can put up with: we know all about it, and being warned, are armed. How carefully we avoid treading on the thin places of the good nature of that being! We take every possible precaution with so-and-so, and consequently we find him delightful. The same holds good with the sullen one of our acquaintance, or the malicious. The faults of these are "writ large," and we give the failing wide room. It is the "little ways" that are really so provoking, the pins of faults that prick so hard. Why should I be so cross with the lady who brings an umbrella into my drawing-room where I and half-a-dozen others are at tea? It cannot really be of moment that she should try to find a place for it in impossible corners and against tables where it inevitably falls down; but it is a worry.

Why do people so often repeat their farewell messages and good-byes? Even through the closed door you may hear them saying "Then you *will* come on Saturday; *mind* you do," or "I'll be sure to bring it back; *good*-bye."

The incurably tidy person in a house is almost as tiresome as the inveterately untidy. The one puts every possession you have into some perfectly proper place, but one which it would never have occurred to you to choose for it; the other never can spend ten minutes in any room without bestrewing it with unnecessary odds and ends: both are unreasonably trying to the temper. The friend who talks every trivial subject through and through, plagues us quite as heartily as the person from whom no more than a bald comment on the most notable occurrence can be extracted; worse than either is she who repeats every remark we make, by way of answer, "The Browns were quite well, were they?" "Mrs. Jones' cold was worse, was it?" "You went to the Smiths', did you?" till your harmless speech is transformed in your mind to a savage one. Who does not know the worry of an acquaintance who finishes every sentence before you are half-way through it? "I had a delightful afternoon yesterday——" you begin, "At the twopenny concert? Oh, yes it *was* lovely," your visitor says, when you did not even know there was such a thing as a twopenny concert! or else, "I think this weather is——" "*Atrocious*—yes, it really is," says your friend. You were going to say "delightfully bracing," but that is nothing.

The people whose tastes are never the same for six months together are tiresome, too. An elderly visitor, perhaps, to whom one wishes to make the house agreeable, comes to stay, and mentions that he always sleeps with his head at the bottom of the bed, and his feet where the pillows usually are, and things are so arranged for him. Before his next visit one gives lessons to the housemaid, and the room is prepared amidst the gigglings of the maids in this eccentric fashion. He comes, and in five minutes rings the bell, and with upraised eyeglass inquires why his couch is thus topsy-turvied? He has changed, and forgotten the fad of yore, but it is a "little way" that is provoking to his hostess. A lady who has travelled a great deal takes lemon in her milkless and sugarless tea. We bear it in mind, and when she comes a year later arrange and present cut lemons with pardonable pride. Alas! "*Milk*, if you please, and plenty of sugar," says the dame in an injured tone before a roomful of people. Her whilom "little way" has faded from her mind. The people who find some fault with everything you do, whose praise always has the sting of a "but" at the end which transmutes the whole into a reproof, the people who ask your advice, request addresses, patterns, information, lists of books; and never take any scrap of all for use, are provoking. The acquaintances who talk of what has befallen Augustus, Wilhelmina, Lady Flora, Basil, Cyrus, Amelia, or Lord Eustace, as if you knew all about them, when you have no faintest idea of their personality, plague you much. The girl who never seems to enjoy any amusement you provide for her, and who never observes such small courtesies as writing to acknowledge a gift, or recording her safe return after a visit; the one who covers sheets of paper with accounts of the merest trifles, the person who is effusively friendly at one time, and apparently forgets your name at another, all these things provoke one to disproportionate wrath.

When I was a school-girl I remember one night in the dormitory we were criticising, not in the most kindly fashion, the dress of some new arrivals, when the conversation was interrupted by a remark from the far corner of the room where slept a little girl of ten, who had, by the way, been sent early to bed for bad behaviour. In her somewhat deep voice she said slowly, "Thophy Thutton! turn your eyeth into your own wardrobe, and be thtill."

I often think of her when I make unkind remarks on the "little ways" of my neighbours, but they annoy me nevertheless, and in spite of my knowledge that my own ways are equally provoking.

IVOR MERLE.

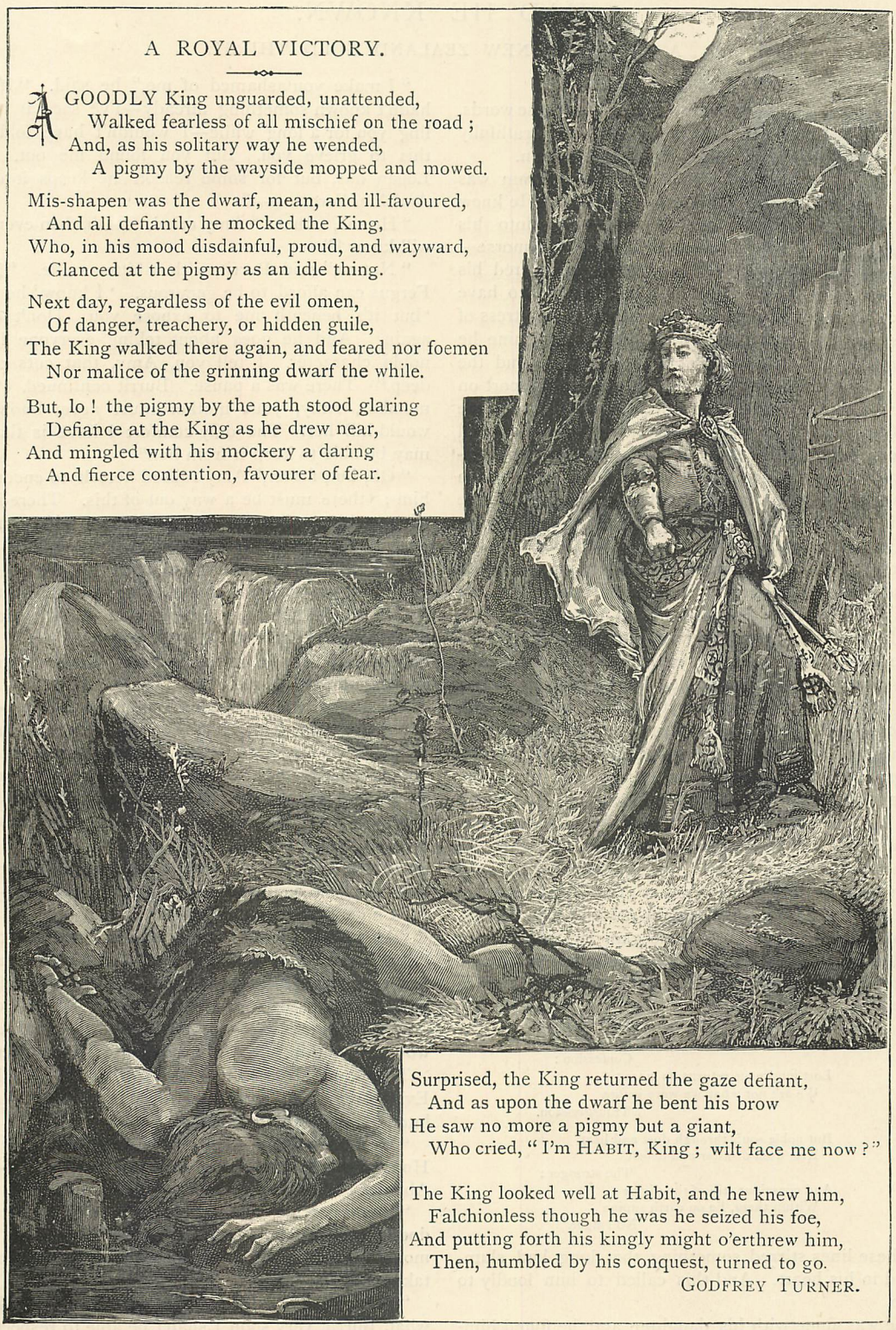
A ROYAL VICTORY.

A GOODLY King unguarded, unattended,
Walked fearless of all mischief on the road ;
And, as his solitary way he wended,
A pigmy by the wayside mopped and mowed.

Mis-shapen was the dwarf, mean, and ill-favoured,
And all defiantly he mocked the King,
Who, in his mood disdainful, proud, and wayward,
Glanced at the pigmy as an idle thing.

Next day, regardless of the evil omen,
Of danger, treachery, or hidden guile,
The King walked there again, and feared nor foemen
Nor malice of the grinning dwarf the while.

But, lo ! the pigmy by the path stood glaring
Defiance at the King as he drew near,
And mingled with his mockery a daring
And fierce contention, favourer of fear.



Surprised, the King returned the gaze defiant,
And as upon the dwarf he bent his brow
He saw no more a pigmy but a giant,
Who cried, " I'm HABIT, King ; wilt face me now ? "

The King looked well at Habit, and he knew him,
Falchionless though he was he seized his foe,
And putting forth his kingly might o'erthrew him,
Then, humbled by his conquest, turned to go.

GODFREY TURNER.

HAD HE KNOWN.

A STORY OF NEW ZEALAND GOLD THIRST.

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

OST miserable! In these words, Burrit might have truthfully described his condition.

He knew that Ingram was better of his illness. He knew also—it was burnt into his mind by a terrible remorse—that he had not recovered his reason. He seemed to have forgotten much that had happened when the stress of undeserved misfortune drove him mad. His mine he seldom spoke of, though at first he had bound the doctor by a solemn vow to visit it daily, and report on its condition. The doctor never made the toilsome pilgrimage; but in many pious fictions he described the exact state of the mine, insisting on what was perfectly true, that it was undisturbed. At length, Ingram ceased to ask about it. His extravagant fancies were leaving him, and in their place were the vague dreams of a soul that slept, whom the most pressing needs of life and the keenest sorrow, the wildest joy, could not rouse from its lethargy. He was harmless now, but how foolish! How piteously like to a little child!

All this time Mrs. Ingram had been forced to depend on the charity of her friends. Burrit had a passionate longing to help her, but lacked the means. His debts swallowed up everything. If he could only have repaid that £300! And yet that would be nothing; it would not deserve the name of reparation. A deed once done there is no escape from its consequences. Could he restore his poor friend to himself and his wife and children? Could he efface the remembrance of heart-breaking sorrow, the stains of bitter tears that had blotted through so many pages of their book of life? It was paltry grovelling to imagine that any fraction of this could be paid for with money, by any sum whatsoever. Once glancing at an open book his wife had left upon the table, he read these words which rushed upon his mind with all the force of truth—

"Wounds of the soul though healed will ache;
The reddening scars remain and make
Confession:
Lost innocence returns no more;
We are not what we were before
Transgression.

But noble souls through dust and heat,
Rise from disaster and defeat
The stronger:
And conscious still of the divine
Within them, lie on earth supine
No longer."

These lines stirred something that long had slumbered in his heart. And this called to him loudly to arise.

He was alone with his daughter, and he found himself telling her all. Patiently, silently, she heard him to the end.

"I make you ashamed of me," he said. "If you hadn't known something already—I've seen it troubling you for a long while—I wouldn't have told you this to grieve you. But you found me out. And Logan has, but for some reason he keeps it close. And MacFergus——"

"He too, father!" Amy cried. "Oh, then everyone will know!"

"Not so," said Burrit, with a bitter smile. "MacFergus can afford to be generous. 'I know,' he says, 'but it's beneath me to expose you. Don't do it again.' And he goes about telling everyone I'm a noble character. I tell you, Amy, that cuts pretty deep." There was a pause. Burrit continued. "Remember, Amy, your mother must never know. It would kill her. The only comfort I have is that we may be able to keep it from her."

"Oh, but, father," Amy roused herself to encourage him; "there must be a way out of this. There is out of everything. Perhaps you blame yourself too much. You alone are not responsible for everything. The doctor says this insanity had been coming on for a long time, the disappointment about the mine hastened it, but could not have produced it all at once. It might have happened in any case; it is not quite hopeless; it may be cured after all. And you will repay the money."

"If it takes the last penny I ever get in this world."

"It won't do that. You won't only be able to pay that, but those other debts. Nothing lasts for ever, not even hard times, not our troubles, nor poor Emily's. Some time, perhaps, all this will seem to us like a bad dream, a thing that can't come over again. No! we are not going to let this crush us. We are very sorry for it, you and I"—and with a sudden, tender pity she laid her cheek against the hand clasping her own—"we can't hope to forget it entirely."

"Ah, Amy," said Burrit, almost breaking down, "you're a good daughter to me. I don't deserve you. You've nothing but comfort for me; but after all, the most that we can do—the thing remains." And to herself, his daughter sadly acknowledged the truth of his words. The things we have done, alas! always remain.

The same day, MacFergus called at the hotel. Evidently he had something on his mind; he absolutely panted with excitement.

"Well, Burrit," he said, "I've some news for you. How many shares have you in the Happy Thought? About a fifth of the whole mine, haven't you?"

"You know as well as I do," said Burrit. "It doesn't matter much anyway. I was obliged to have money; I sent word to Sampson to sell at any price; take what was going."

"You idiot!" shouted MacFergus. "Tell you what, Burrit, very soon I shan't be able to respect you enough to be your enemy. Didn't I tell you last week we'd splendid prospects?"

"You've been telling me that for five years," said Burrit.

"Well, I'm a true prophet. We've struck it rich! No mistake about it this time; you can see the gold all through, great dabs of it in the stone. Not a soul knows but myself and some of the men I can trust. I came to tell you first of all. Wire at once to stop the sale of those shares; they mayn't have gone yet. They'll be double their value to-morrow, they'll treble it before next week."

"I'll send a telegram at once," said Burrit.

"You take it very coolly. It means a fortune for us."

"It doesn't seem worth while hurrahing over a thing that should have turned up two months ago," Burrit replied. "If you'd 'struck it rich' then, I should have been saved from a great deal that can't be altered now."

"Well, cheer up! The clouds will roll by. Can't stop, have to meet the steamer; she's coming in now."

In this statement, MacFergus was slightly mistaken. The steamer had come to a dead stop half a mile from the wharf. Those passengers who did not mind walking or being carried over a long stretch of very soft mud, had gone off in boats. A party of three—two ladies and a gentleman—had refused to submit to this indignity, much to the annoyance of the captain, who was anxious to be rid of all his encumbrances.

"Come, sir!" he cried to the gentleman, a feeble-looking person, elderly and of an aspect the reverse of amiable. "The boat's waiting for you and the ladies to go ashore."

"We're not going," said his passenger. "I'm surprised at you, Captain, attempting to force a person of my age and delicate health, and also two ladies, little accustomed to hardships or exposure, to get into a leaky boat and after that to walk over a disgusting mud flat."

"We can't get up to the wharf before high water, and that'll be nine o'clock," returned the Captain. "You'd better go ashore. The ladies'll be carried over the mud, and so may you, if you like."

"I don't like," said the gentleman stiffly. "Certainly we will not be carried;" and he and his wife drew themselves up as if some deadly insult had been proposed. "Why isn't your time table arranged to suit the tides?"

"Why isn't everything as it should be?" inquired the Captain satirically.

"It's monstrous that people should be brought here at low tide and commanded to get ashore as they can through mud and water."

"Mud's mud. I know that as well as you," said the Captain, "but you're the first passenger of mine who's objected to it. I've landed hundreds this way."

"I don't care if you've landed thousands," the gentleman persisted. "It only proves what tyranny and brute force can do. I'll protest against it if no one else does."

"Oh, Bernard, say no more to the dreadful man," entreated his wife. "He can't force us into his horrid boat, and he must take the steamer up to the wharf some time. We can wait."

"I wouldn't wait if I were you, mamma," said the younger lady, an active, determined-looking little body of five feet and half an inch. "I don't care about the mud, and I'd rather be carried by half-a-dozen men than stay on this pokey little steamer any longer."

"Be quiet, Dora," said her mother. "We are going to wait."

They did so; and a weary time it was for Miss Dora. For two hours her parents continued to complain of the country (which was new to them); of the weather, always execrable; of the incivility of the people, especially captains of small steamers; of all things, and, finally, of each other.

"I believe, Bernard, there's some other way of getting to this out-of-the-world place."

"How can there be? Isn't it an island?"

"Don't be stupid. I don't mean the country; but this wretched settlement straight before us. We might have travelled overland."

"How? So far as I can ascertain, there are only two roads in this island—the Great North road, and the Great South road, and they run from end to end."

"Nonsense! There are roads, of course, and railways, though in an unfinished state. Oh, dear, Bernard!"

"Well, what's the matter?" inquired her husband. "Please don't scream."

"Why we're alone! They've all gone ashore and left us."

This appeared to be the case. Until now, while sitting on the deck and talking, they had not noticed that nothing was to be seen or heard of their captain and his crew.

"This is abominable!" cried Mr. Chillcot—such was his name. "It's contrary to law! Who's here to hang out a light? Suppose some vessel comes into the harbour, and runs us down! Suppose a storm comes on, and we're driven ashore; suppose we're blown out to sea!"

"Oh, gracious, Bernard! don't talk of it. Go and find a lamp and hang it up; go and see if the steamer's properly anchored."

"There may be someone on board, after all," suggested Dora. "Hadn't you better see, papa?"

Mr. Chillcot was about to start on a thorough search of the vessel, when a voice was heard singing a Salvation Army hymn, and, from the fore-hatch, a man emerged carrying the lamps.

"Are you the only man aboard?" inquired Mr. Chillcot.

"Why, no, sir," said the man. "There's the cook."

"Only the cook! Why have they all gone ashore?"

"It's the night of the entertainment," said the man.

"Entertainment!" cried Mr. Chillcot; and to this his wife added "How absurd in a place like this!"

"Oh, mamma, how delightful!" cried Dora. "An entertainment in the settlement! Let's all go ashore

and see it. You'll row us ashore, won't you? We'll pay you, of course. Papa, let's go; there's no mud now; it's half tide."

"You could get up to the wharf in the dinghy," said the man. "That's the only boat left aboard."

"Does it leak?" inquired Mr. Chillcot. "I will get into no boat that leaks."

"Bless you, sir," returned the man, "they all leaks, more or less."

"Of course," said Dora. "Papa, you can keep your feet up on the seat."

"Well, anything would be better than staying here," said Mrs. Chillcot, who was heartily tired of waiting. "You're ridiculously afraid of water, Bernard. A leaky boat is a very common thing."

They went ashore. The sailor directed them to the place of entertainment. It was midway in the main street, a long, low hall, whose windows blazed with light, and from whose open door came a loud confused babble of many voices. The man at the door remarked, in an indifferent tone of voice as if he didn't care, but it might concern them, that the charge for admission was one shilling. Children half price.

"Do you call me a child?" inquired Dora, elevating herself on tip-toe, and presenting him with her shilling.

"What's the entertainment for?" inquired Mr. Chillcot, who always liked to know where his shilling went to.

"Lady in distress," said the man laconically.

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Chillcot, with a sarcastic smile; "they are all 'ladies' here."

The entertainment was already half over. At the further end of the hall was a platform with a curtain hung before it. The chairman (Treloar) had informed the audience that this curtain was about to rise on the first scene of a delightful charade, in three parts, performed by lady and gentlemen amateurs of the settlement.

The curtain made three attempts to rise. It rose a few inches, and then stopped. It rose again, and disclosed several shapely feet in different sorts of boots and shoes. It went up at a furious rate, then, with loud cracking and snapping, detached itself from its fastenings, and fell in a tremendous mass on the performers, who wriggled painfully to free themselves from its folds.

"Here! some of you boys, come and clear this lumber away," commanded Treloar, and, amidst loud laughter, two men, of more than ordinary stature, ascended the platform, and bundled up the curtain—nothing else but the main-sheet of the cutter *Lily* then in port. "We'll not be able to 'draw a veil over the scene' again," Treloar announced; "but you'll guess the words all the better."

The charade was a great success. There was an escaped convict in it (the doctor) who fled to the Diggings, and, in an extraordinary way, panned out gold from the first stream he came to, made his fortune, proved his innocence, and got the Queen's pardon. There was his betrothed, a tall and stately damsel (Polcraft, junior, who, his comrades said, looked "exactly like a girl"). There was his unprincipled companion (Logan) who tried to steal his gold, and also the faithful betrothed; but, foiled in his endeavours, had to put up with the awful old lady (Polcraft, senior) whom he had supposed would have been his mother-in-law. There were many "local hits" and sly allusions, all received with hearty laughter; at the guessing of the word ("Gold-mine") there was great clapping of hands and stamping of feet; and a perfect bombardment of bouquets. Every flower in the settlement was thrown at the heads of the performers.

"I should think this was ridiculous enough to satisfy even you, Dora," said Mrs. Chillcot. "Let us go at once."

"Oh, mamma, it's splendid! Do be quiet; that big, queer-looking man, the chairman, is going to say something."

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Treloar, "you've seen the end of our entertainment, and if you're like me, you'll say that an evening's enjoyment with one's friends, and a good, hearty laugh is worth a shilling any time—much more to some of us. But now, I'm going to make a confession. This was only a scheme to get you together. I want more than a shilling from each of you; in plain words, I want as much as I can get. If anyone doesn't like this sort of thing, there's the door; he can go. No compulsion!" He waited for a moment. "Ah! none goes. I'm glad of that—glad to see that we deserve the name we miners have always had of being a free-handed lot. You know why I'm making this appeal. There isn't a single person here who doesn't know that I'm asking you to give out of your abundance to a woman utterly destitute, whose husband has lost the most precious of all things. Like her little children, he is helpless and dependent upon her. How can she care for him and them, and maintain herself as well? Most of us would be crippled in such a case. Well, that's all I need say. After that, you can button up your pockets if you like."

Here there was a voice from the midst of the audience, a voice suspiciously like Polcraft's, "Send round the hat!"

"I'm coming to that," responded Treloar. "I reserve the privilege of starting this little game myself. Now, I should like to say, 'Nothing but gold!' It seems to me that in an affair of this sort we miners shouldn't deal in baser coin of the realm. But one must make allowances. Some of us are 'down on our luck;' most of us have wives and children to find for. No good in robbing Peter to pay Paul. So we won't look unkindly on silver either. Now then, here comes the hat, which I and my friend, Mr. Logan, will try to ballast a little before it starts on its journey."

"Logan! I knew him once! Does he mix with these people?" inquired Mr. Chillcot of no one in particular.

"There's no one else to mix with here," said his wife mournfully. "They're coming our way," she whispered. "What shall we give, Bernard? Will five shillings seem too little. All these common-looking men are putting sovereigns in, and I believe the chairman gave something immense."

"Pooh, no one knows us here," whispered her husband back again. "Five shillings will be ample. These miners always shovel their gold about."

"Mamma, mamma!" entreated Dora, "put everything in that you have."

"What is the matter, you silly girl?" said Mrs. Chillcot, staring bewilderedly at her daughter's flushed and excited face, and at the same time dropping half-a-crown into the hat.

"Oh, don't you see, don't you understand?" cried poor Dora, with tears in her eyes. "It's poor Emily!"

"Merciful powers!" exclaimed Mrs. Chillcot, "let's get out." And being all of one accord in this, they pushed their way through the crowd, and the next moment stood in the empty, starlit street.

"Emily! Oh, my unhappy child, to have fallen so low!" Mrs. Chillcot began, in a loud wailing voice. "The recipient of public charity, mixed up with vulgar, common men and women!"

"Mamma!" said Dora indignantly, "they are good people. It is we who are vulgar and common—no, not common; we're uncommonly mean."

"Dora, you know nothing. I am blushing all over to think of a subscription being got up for my own daughter."

"I suppose, if we'd done our part, it wouldn't have been needed," said Dora. "As soon as you heard, why didn't you send over all the money you had. It was enough to induce most persons to have done so."

"We came ourselves. I'm sure the expensive, uncomfortable journey we've had, coming into a rough place like this, was more than most would have expected of us. Oh, here is the hotel at last! I wonder if they've got our luggage."

"For goodness' sake, don't bother about the luggage!" said her husband. "I wish I'd never gone into that crowded, stuffy place. The benches were so close together; a man's knees were boring into my back all the time. Come along, Dora, do you want to stay out all night?"

"I feel," said Dora, stamping along behind them, "as if I could creep into some hole in the ground and never come out again. Oh, how mean—how horribly mean we are!"

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

"AND so, Emily, when we heard such dreadful news we felt obliged to come at once," Mrs. Chillcot said, speaking for herself and her husband.

They had found their way to their daughter's home—a "shabby, poverty-stricken little place," Mrs. Chillcot called it. She took no heed of the spotless cleanliness within and without, the wealth of flowers bordering the garden paths, the matchless prospect of hill and vale and stream. All these were things that had nothing to do with money or position, and might be had by common people.

"I am sorry you have had to take such a long journey for me," Emily said nervously. The shock of the sudden appearance of her nearest relatives had been almost too much for her. She had been forgiven and this is a painful process to undergo, especially when one is not conscious of having done wrong. It is more than painful—it is excruciating when those who mete out forgiveness are people of the Chillcot type.

"Of course, it has been a severe trouble to us," said Mrs. Chillcot. "Since I heard of it I've hardly had a good night's rest. I am surprised to see you looking so well, Emily. In your place I should have been prostrated."

Emily smiled faintly. "I can't afford to be prostrated. I will go and bring Walter in. You will hardly know him, I am afraid. Lately his hair has turned almost white."

"Surely, Emily, you do not allow your husband to see everyone as usual!" cried Mrs. Chillcot.

"Why not?" asked her daughter. "The doctor advises it. The more people, the more he has of cheerful society, the better. Solitude is worse than anything for him."

"I am very sorry, of course; but I would rather not see him," said Mrs. Chillcot. "You must excuse us, Emily, you really must. My nerves will not permit it. Indeed, I think it's very inconsiderate to propose such a thing. I am sure your father will agree with me."

"I certainly would prefer not to see the poor fellow," said Mr. Chillcot. "I feel very sorry for him, and all that, you know, Emily; but I think you'd better not bring him in."

"Very well," said Emily. The muscles of her face quivered, as if she found it difficult to preserve her self-control.

"Never mind, Em," said Dora, bending near to her sister, and putting her arm round her waist. "I want to see Walter if no one else does, and as he can't be brought in, I'm going out to him. And where are the children, those dear little dots? I've ever so many things for them."

"Yes, where are your children?" asked Mrs. Chillcot. "I suppose you've sent them away somewhere?"

"They were away for a short time; but I have them back again now," Emily said. "They are with their father."

"Really, Emily, isn't that very incautious? I don't want to hurt your feelings, my darling child; but you know he is—is out of his mind, and such people are never safe. The children should never be with him, and he ought to be constantly watched."

"Mamma," said her daughter, almost in tears, "would you have me be so cruel as to take his children from him—the only comfort he has left? It does him good; with them he is always at his best, and he is never quite alone. Two of my neighbours are living with me, Mr. and Mrs. Brown. Mrs. Brown has been a nurse; she is a very clever woman, and is ready to turn her hand to anything. Her husband is always at hand if he should be required, and he is very useful about the place. I allow them to live here rent free, and make what they can out of the farm; so I have nothing to pay for their services."

"Why, very likely they get the best of the bargain!" cried Mr. Chillcot, suddenly waking up.

"I don't know," his daughter replied, "I never thought of that. They have been very kind to me; what I should have done without them, I hardly know."

"But, Emily, if they are making a great profit out of your farm? Why didn't you insist that he should work it on shares?"

"My dear mother!" said Emily, feeling almost beside herself, "great profits are not made out of bush farms. All I'm afraid of for the good people is that they won't get enough to pay them for what they've done."

"I see Dora has found the children," said Mrs. Chillcot, looking out of the window. "What a mercy, Emily, that you have only two." Her daughter said nothing, but coloured to her very temples. "Now that we are by ourselves (Dora is so emotional) we had better have a little serious talk about your future prospects."

"I think of them as little as possible," said her daughter.

"That is very foolish. I and your father have thought of them a great deal. We have decided that you must go back with us to Sydney. You know how small our means are. We can't provide for you apart from ourselves; but we can manage to find room for you in our own house."

"But the children—my husband?" said Emily, looking at her wistfully.

"We do not object to the children. They are so young, and we should be able to superintend their education. They would have advantages you could never procure. As for your husband——"

"Remember, I do not leave him. I consent to nothing that separates him either from the children or me."

"Be reasonable, Emily. I have conversed with one or two distinguished medical men on the subject of his er—er—disease, and they are positive that a person in that state of mind should be placed in some institution where he can have proper attention. I know some people are unreasonably prejudiced against asylums——"

"Oh, mother—my mother!" cried Mrs. Ingram in her anguish. "Would you send him to an asylum amongst strange people who wouldn't care what became of him, amongst those who really are mad! It would kill him, I know it would! Here everything is in his favour. None troubles him. Everything possible is done for him. And indeed, his case is not so hopeless as you think. The doctor believes it only requires time."

"Who is your doctor?" asked Mrs. Chillcot. "Not a properly qualified medical man, I suppose?—only doctor by courtesy."

"He is an M.D., I believe," said Emily. "He is a young man, but he is thought to be clever in his profession."

"Oh, my dear, you must have better advice! What can a young man know? When you hear the opinion of an experienced physician, you will agree to what I propose. For, consider, if he should not get better, if it should be like this all his life—you would be the nurse and the personal attendant of a madman as long he lives. I put things plainly, Emily, but it is best not to gloss over facts."

"Yes; he may not get better," said Emily, tears rolling down her white cheeks. "But I shall never leave him. Could I be happy anywhere, if I knew my husband was shut up in a mad-house, dying by inches, as he would, if he were separated from all he cares for? Mother, it would be like a bird beating itself to death against the bars of its cage."

"My dear," remonstrated Mr. Chillcot; "this is very painful for Emily. You are trying her too much."

"It is painful for me, Bernard; excessively painful; but you never think of that. Well, then, Emily, if you don't consent to this, what will you do?"

"If Walter does not get better soon, I shall have to sell the farm. I am told that it is worth a thousand pounds. I shall invest the money; the income will partly keep us. And I shall lease a cottage in the settlement and begin dressmaking. I know of nothing else that I can do."

"And if you can't support yourself that way?" asked her father.

"Then at the worst, I shall be amongst friends, the truest and best I have ever known."

"And can you, my daughter, calmly make up your mind to live on public charity?" said Mrs. Chillcot. "You have changed indeed! We were inexpressibly annoyed to find that an entertainment had been got up for your benefit by these people you call your friends. We were there, accidentally, of course. You may imagine my feelings Emily, when from the middle of such men, and oh! such women, someone shouted, 'Send round the hat!' and after your father and I had contributed, we found it was for our own daughter!"

Distressed as she was, the ludicrous aspect of the situation forced itself upon Mrs. Ingram, and she could not help smiling.

"Oh, you can laugh! No doubt you knew and approved. This is just like you, Emily; you're too proud to let us know you are in need; we only hear of your troubles by chance, as one might say; but you can stoop to beg of strangers."

"I did not know," said Mrs. Ingram; "but I cannot be offended. Once, like you, I might have thought it lowered one to accept such help. I would not, if I could do without it. But if I had refused public charity, as you call it, we should have starved. I have had no need to beg. These friends came to me with open hands, when I did not know which way to turn, or where to look for help. I felt as if they had been sent by Heaven, and I believe they were! As for not telling you—I could not. You are my mother? I do not wish to wound you; but if you remember as well as I what you said to me when I married and left you—in what words you dismissed me from my old home—and if you could put yourself in my place,

"'THE BOAT'S WAITING'" (*p.* 237).

you would not think it strange I was too proud to ask —too proud to let you know I was in want."

There was silence. Presently, the indefatigable Mrs. Chillcot began again: "Well, then, Emily, after that tirade, I may say you have some days to consider your decision. You may change your mind."

"No, never!"

"We leave for home very shortly. While we are at the hotel we shall see you every day."

It is to be feared that Mrs. Ingram was not delighted by this announcement. These were her own mother and father, she still loved them; and yet this interview had been so painful, she would not wish it to be repeated.

Later in the day, she had a visit from Mr. Briggs, the former owner of the farm. She was surprised to see him: she could not imagine why he had come.

"You'll not remember me, Mrs. Ingram," he said. "Do you really, though? I came about business with Mr. Ingram, and I'm really sorry to hear he's ill, and can't attend to anything. I was cut up by the news. My word! you have improved this place. I never saw such grass in my time. Well," as Mrs. Ingram pressed him to come in, "I don't know about my boots. But, thank you kindly, I'll come in, and have some talk with you about Mr. Ingram."

"Couldn't you tell me your business?" suggested Mrs. Ingram, when they were inside, and Briggs had carefully seated himself, arranging his boots so as to do as little harm as possible.

"I don't want to trouble you, Mrs. Ingram; but it's this. Last December, I lent your husband £300."

"Three hundred pounds!" echoed Mrs. Ingram despairingly. "I didn't know he had borrowed a penny. What could he want it for? What has he done with it?"

"It was this way," said Briggs. "I've always had a great fondness for this farm. There's not such a place anywhere, not for beauty, nor yet for situation and magnificence of prospects round about. I've often felt my heart uplifted in me, a-going out of a fine morning and seeing the sun come up behind the range, and the trees all black in the shade, and all tipped with gold where the light caught them, and blue mist curling up like smoke out of all the gullies. Ah! it's a splendid sight, and it's beautiful all times. Sunrise and sunset, midday and midnight, fair weather and foul, it's not to be matched anywhere. Soon as I'd sold it to your husband I wanted it back again.

You know, I left on account of my wife; she wanted society. When she'd got society, she didn't like it. Half of the people were stuck up, and the other half wanted to be, so it was like trying to sit on two stools, between 'em we fell to the ground. One day Martha says to me, 'The old place was better; we hadn't many neighbours there; but they were friendly; I don't care if I go back to-morrow.' 'Done!' says I, 'you've said the word: back we go.' Now, not hearing from Mr. Ingram since I'd lent him the money, I thought times must be bad; perhaps he'd be willing for me to take the farm back again. He gave me a thousand. I'd pay that down in cash—as for the £300, that'll stand against improvements. He's fenced and put up out-buildings, and added to the house, I see. But maybe," he concluded, "you've got fond of the place?"

"I believe I have," said Mrs. Ingram, with a sad smile. "But your offer is too good to be refused. If you could wait, I have hopes that in a few months my husband may be able to attend to these things."

"I can wait," said Briggs. "When he or you like to close the bargain, I'm ready. And don't you bother about the three hundred. We're comfortable, my wife and I, we've neither chick nor child; we needn't put the screw on people."

"This is very kind of you, Mr. Briggs. You relieve me of great anxiety. I hope to see you fully repaid."

"I'll be repaid when I get my farm," said Briggs, smiling all over his broad, florid face. "Do you know I love the place so I mean to be buried here! I don't know whether it's against law for a man to be buried on his own land; but I mean to try. They may turn me out afterwards if they like; but if I get the start of them, I don't think my bones will be disturbed."

He said farewell and rode away; but even from outside the gate turned back to say, "Don't trouble about that money. We don't want it."

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

THEY had indeed "struck it rich" in the Happy Thought. Within a few days, the shares had doubled in value and were still rising. They rose till a dividend was declared and paid; then dropped a little, then rose again, higher than before, as every day exciting reports were published of the richness of the mine. The battery was crushing night and day, large dividends were paid fortnightly, and MacFergus was so excited he could hardly sleep or eat.

Burrit's telegram had been in time to save half of his shares. He was now in a position to do more than pay the £300 he had wished for so earnestly. He had cleared off all his pressing debts, and had a certain prospect of freeing himself before the year was out. If the mine continued to be productive, he might even yet be a rich man. He felt that he had sold himself for nought. If he had only waited; if he had only known

The time had come for restitution. He sought an interview with Treloar.

"You have done a great deal for Mrs. Ingram," he said. "I want you to receive and transmit to her a sum of money I owe her husband. She knows nothing about it."

He handed Treloar a cheque for £400.

"Why, Burrit," the manager said, "what is this! It's strange, but she's just found out that Ingram borrowed £300 about the time he went insane. Why he wanted it, what he did with it, no one knows. If the man who lent it hadn't been a good-natured, easy-going fellow it might have caused her serious trouble. This will be a god-send to her."

"She would have had it long ago, if I'd had the means," Burrit said. He did not intend to tell Treloar the whole truth.

"I thank you heartily on her account," said Treloar. "This is generous of you. I take it as a gift; to say that you owe the money is only a modest way of putting it."

"On my word, I owe it, and more," Burrit said. "He, Ingram, bought some land of me for £300. I wouldn't have sold, but I was pressed for money. You see, I knew it was worthless, and he gave me a high price. Ever since I've regretted making that bargain, but never before had the chance of repaying the money."

"Where was the land?"

"It joins the upper part of his farm."

"Where he thought he'd found gold. That was why he wanted it?"

"I suppose so," Burrit said, wondering whether he was telling too much. "But there was no gold in it, and it was never worth what he gave me."

"Well, few men would have been conscientious enough to return the money," Treloar said. "And this is £400. I thought you said £300 just now."

"He gave me that," Burrit said, "but there would be expenses, and interest. I wanted to be on the right side."

"Why this is better and better!" Treloar said. "You do things in a princely style. Do you intend to have the land re-conveyed to you?"

"I want never to hear of or be bothered with it again!" Burrit said vehemently. "No, it joins the farm; there's a hundred acres. Mrs. Ingram may keep it."

"Well, you're a noble fellow, Burrit," said Treloar.

"I noble!" said Burrit, with zeal and scorn. "There's nothing noble about me, I assure you. I'd rather you didn't mention my name in this matter."

Treloar stared at him. "Why, man! what's come to you? Your left hand not to know what your right hand doeth, eh? I'm afraid Mrs. Ingram won't like to take this without knowing where it comes from. Why!" he laughed, "she might think it was conscience-money. Really, you drive it too far."

"Well, so it is—but do as you like," said Burrit, weariedly, "only don't mention it to anyone else." He went out, leaving Treloar still amazed.

The manager could not refrain from mentioning it. Burrit became the popular idol. The whole settlement united to praise his honourable conduct, his unselfish generosity, his singular modesty. The *Mercury* got

hold of the story and referred to him as "one of our old identities whose name has always been honoured in our midst, and whose heart has not been hardened by a well-deserved prosperity." The Anglican clergyman, the Presbyterian and Wesleyan ministers, who had hitherto treated him somewhat indifferently, as a man neither very good nor very bad, and therefore not interesting, now crossed the road to speak to him; and seemed to look upon him as one of the pillars of the church—a man who practised what was preached. Everyone appeared suddenly to want to know him; people who had made a practice of cutting him, called at the hotel and assured him of an unchangeable friendship. Mrs. Ingram was unrestrained in the expression of her gratitude; MacFergus glorified him, in season and out of season. As there is a show-boy or show-girl in little schools, he became the show-man of the settlement. He had a horrible and not quite unfounded suspicion that he was pointed out to strangers as, "Mr. Burrit, the best fellow amongst us, so unselfish, generous; I'll tell you something about him," etc., etc. It was sickening! And all this while the Happy Thought turned out gold, and he grew richer without effort of his own; and had leisure to think how much happier he might have been if he had let things take their course, and not tried to alter the course of Providence by attempting to make good come out of evil.

About this time, it occurred to the Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Mr. MacWhinger, that with one glorious effort he might extinguish the debt on the old church and form the nucleus of a fund for building a new one. He would hold a bazaar, or, as this name had grown offensive, a sale of work, a gift-auction and a conversazione combined, to last a whole week. Every evening there would be an entertainment, musical, literary, social. His colleagues, the other two clergymen, were pledged to assist him in this stupendous work. As the effect of six consecutive nights of amusement might be bad for the younger and more frivolous portion of the community, it was decided that each evening, after the light and frothy part of the entertainment had been cleared away, an address should be delivered by one of the three clergymen; said address, though not a sermon, to be on some edifying subject. The three clerical gentlemen had each to prepare two addresses. The Rev. Mr. MacWhinger decided first to give an account of the life and labours of John Knox, part of an address he had already delivered eleven times; secondly, to dilate on True Charity.

This fell on the last evening—Saturday night. So well had the inhabitants of the settlement been whipped in by the emissaries of MacWhinger that hardly a soul remained at home—scarcely anyone, in fact, but the doctor. On going to his room that afternoon, Logan had found him stretched on the sofa, his face turned to the wall.

"What is the matter?" Logan asked.

"Nothing!" said the doctor, fiercely. "Never mind. If people come, tell them to doctor themselves!"

"But what *is* the matter?" persisted his friend. "Are you ill?"

"Ill!" said the doctor, scornfully. "Crushed, pulverised, rejected! Nine, ninety, nine hundred years, all the same! Nothing left; nothing in the whole world but a thousand millions of idiotic fools, and I the biggest of them all!"

"Why, doctor, I'm sorry——"

"Hypocrite!" interrupted the doctor. "You're not sorry! No one is! Beg pardon," he added immediately. "Not your fault. Go away. Shut the door!"

To resume: everyone flocked to the hall of entertainment. From the platform the minister looked down on a densely-packed mass of human beings, most of whom, instead of listening to him, were engaged in vivacious conversation. Presently, for some reason or other, this died away into comparative silence. MacWhinger, having secured a hearing, rose to the occasion, and hurled his words at the heads of the audience with the fury and fire of enthusiasm.

"I believe," he said, "that if we want instances of true charity, we need not go far from our own doors. I mean charity in that sense in which the word is commonly received—the ardent feeling which impels us to succour the distressed, comfort the unhappy, feed the hungry, and clothe the naked. There is quite as much of that amongst us now as there was in the time of the apostles."

Here there was a hum of subdued applause, for people like to be told they are virtuous. The Anglican and the Wesleyan looked anxiously at their brother, as if they feared he had said something heretical. Could any man be as good as he might have been in the time of the apostles?

"Perhaps we should not call this charity," continued MacWhinger, now getting a long way from his notes and speaking extempore. "We should call it benevolence. But call it what you will, it is a grand—an ennobling quality. What do we admire in a mighty river? The fulness, the freedom of its bounty. What is the sun?—the source of light and heat. The same regal beneficence. In man—or woman" (this added as an after-thought)—"there is nothing more admirable than this bounteousness, which, rather than another should suffer, pours all that it has into the lap of the afflicted.

"I have said such instances may be found at our own doors. Shall I go further and say they are amongst us now? Am I justified in tearing away the veil which the humility of a sensitive, honourable nature has thrown over a noble action, disguising its generosity under the name of reparation for a fancied wrong? I need not! I rejoice that, like a city set on a hill, this good work cannot be hidden—that you, that I—that all in this room, know the man!"

"Decidedly bad taste, that," said the Anglican to the Wesleyan. "MacWhinger's enthusiasm always runs away with him."

Every face in the hall was turned towards Burrit. All eyes fastened on him. No; there was one who did not look—his own daughter; her head was bowed,

as if with shame. And Logan; he had only cast on him one glance of cold surprise, or was it contempt? That glance stung him more than the unmeaning stare of all the other eyes. Anyone who knew must despise him now. To have this fulsome praise poured over him; to hear it again and again till he sickened of it; could anything make it worth his while to endure such torment?

He raised his voice, and spoke so that everyone in the hall could hear. "Mr. MacWhinger, you must allow me to add something to your discourse. It's no use me pretending not to know whom you mean. I am the man. But it's a great mistake to point me out as an instance of charity or benevolence or any grand feeling whatever." Here there were some interruptions; laughing protests against "drawing it too fine;" "carrying the thing a little too far." Burrit, sternly looking round him, said—"I'm serious. If you'll listen you'll soon know the reason why. The four hundred pounds was 'conscience money;' that's the proper name; don't call it a 'good work' or 'noble generosity.' It wasn't any 'fancied wrong' I'd done poor Ingram, but a real one. He might be a sane man and amongst us to-night, if it weren't for me. I deceived him about his gold. The first time I salted the stuff it was for a joke; I can say that. I meant to tell him. But he came to buy the land he'd found it on, and I was hard up; I took his money, knowing there was nothing there. I never told him the specimens came from the Happy Thought, not his own reef. And again I changed his samples. Ask Mr. Logan; he found filings of a sovereign in one lot, and he knows who put them there; but he'll never tell on me. I must do that myself! As for reparation, will Mr. MacWhinger tell me there's anything noble in that? Is £400 reparation for a man going mad, throwing away all he has, bringing his wife and children to misery? Is it reparation to myself for having been a thief and a liar? If Mr. MacWhinger is of that opinion he thinks a deal more of money than I do."

There was still silence—the most profound attention. Burrit looked round on the eager, upturned faces.

"It's a kind of farewell to you all!" he said, and strong emotion almost shattered his self-control. "I've lived among you a long while, and till to-day I've been respected. When I came here to-night I suppose most of you thought I was honest and generous and all that. What do you think now? Well—it can't be helped. I couldn't live that lie any longer. I'm not the man you knew, but a meaner sort of creature whom no one will call a friend."

"MEN PUSHED TOWARDS HIM FROM ALL SIDES TO GRASP HIM BY THE HAND."

He ceased, and, to his utter surprise, men pushed towards him from all sides to grasp him by the hand; to assure him that, for all that had come and gone, he might still be their friend. MacWhinger could not lose the opportunity. The last word must be his.

"My friends!" he cried. "Mr. Burrit has shamed us all. What you are capable of I don't know; but I fear that in his place I shouldn't have had the courage to stand up and make a public confession. In our church we don't give absolution. But one thing, I hope, is said in all churches—that a sin repented of, is

a sin forgiven. And, I think, when a man overtaken in a fault repairs his mistake to the best of his ability, and sets off again on the right road, there's but one thing for his neighbours to do—to act as if it had never been."

The minister had never uttered a more popular sentiment. Scarcely had people ceased to applaud him when from a very tightly-packed corner MacFergus broke forth, with a red and shining face, and, in a voice thicker and rougher than usual, demanded to be heard.

"Mr. MacWhinger!" he shouted, "you'll never preach a better sermon than that. You're right, sir, our friend Burrit's done what few of us would like to do. If we were all to get up and make confession there'd be some pretty stories told in this room. You may laugh, all of you; but it's a fact. I've heard of 'salting' before to-night. Mr. Burrit didn't invent it. To hear him talk you'd think so. But if he's waiting there for someone to throw the first stone, he'll have to wait a pretty long while. Yes! there's you and you and you!" his arm swept round like a pendulum. "I know you and I know what you've done."

Here there were cries of "Shame! That's enough," from one section of the assembly, and from another, "Go on, MacFergus! Well done! Expose the whole lot."

"I mean to," retorted the undaunted one. "I'm not going to let one man disgrace himself, and the rest of you go scot-free. Here, Bloxsome! You step forward and tell us all about the Dark Angel (good name, that!), how that company was formed, why it burst up, and how the directors lined their pockets. Your specimens were genuine, weren't they? And you, Mangles, looking innocent in that corner. What did you do, when you were manager of the Great Mogul? What about 'rigging the market,' hey? and 'cooking' your reports till public excitement flared sky-high. Why, you found gold before you'd done a stroke of work! *You'd* better not come forward, I think."

The whole assembly swayed to and fro in indescribable confusion. The shouting of those worthies assailed by MacFergus, the loud laughter of others drowned the feeble efforts of MacWhinger to stem the tumult.

"Stop, Mr. MacFergus," cried Treloar, whose voice, being one of the strongest, made itself heard. "You're mistaken. This is not the Day of Judgment."

"Well for some people it isn't," replied MacFergus. "I suppose I'll have to stop; but I tell you I'm raging to see a man expose the one spot he has on him, while others who are just a mass, stand by, turning up the whites of their virtuous eyes and never saying a word."

The entertainment broke up in disorder. But those who were pressing towards the door fell back and formed a lane for Amy and her father, walking side by side. No one was more beloved and respected than Amy Burrit, known to them all from a child.

She and Burrit had not gone far, when, with wild plunges and lurches, someone rushed after them—MacFergus.

"Going to walk home with you," he gasped. "Just the same you know, old fellow. No worse because everyone knows. Bless us! if we were all found out, where would be the difference?"

"Is that you, my old enemy?" said Burrit. "Come along then."

Amy, tired and depressed, lagged behind the other two. A mist of tears was before her eyes, she stumbled on her path, and immediately a hand grasped her own. Then she saw that Logan also had followed, and was walking beside her.

"Do you remember," he said, "the other night when you bound me to secrecy, and gave me your hand like this?"

"Yes," she answered, weariedly. "There was no need to ask such a thing of you."

"May I ask something of you?"

"What is it?" she said.

"Only to give me your hand again."

"You have taken it," she laughed a little nervously. "But for that I should have fallen."

He released her hand. "I will not take it again, unless you give it of your own free will. But consider before you answer. I may be asking more than you think. It is not for a moment only, an hour, or a day, but for your whole life."

The answer may be surmised from the fact that when they reached the hotel, he still held her hand.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

MR. AND MRS. CHILLCOT had returned to their own home; no one being very much better for their visit. Dora had begged to be allowed to stay with her sister for a time, and was still at the farm. And now, what had been predicted by not a few persons came to pass. Mrs. Ingram, overwrought and troubled for so long, fell ill.

For a long while her husband had remained in the same dull and heedless condition. But now he missed his wife's unwearying care and knew that she was ill. Day after day, as they might have done to a child, they told him this, She was ill, but would soon be better. They repeated the unvarying phrase when they had ceased to believe in it. He was restless, wandering from room to room, pacing up and down. He watched for the appearance of the doctor, he waylaid him when he left, and begged him to say how long it would last. She would get better, would she not? And the doctor always answered Yes.

There came a day when he could not tell this falsehood (so he thought it) quite so glibly. The other man, watching his face with eyes that of late had grown more observant, read there the true answer. The sudden anguish that rushed upon him pierced the dark curtain behind which, for many months, his poor, baffled, bewildered understanding had struggled in vain. He saw—he understood—he was himself again.

"She is dying!" he cried. "Dying after all she has done for me! Oh, let me go to her at once!"

They did not forbid it. It could do no harm, nor, alas! any good. She knew no one; never would know anyone more. But—and Nurse Brown stills tells the

strange story, and never tells it without tears on her good, old face—when he bent over her and called her by name, when he held her in his arms, and, with wild entreaties, prayed that she might live, when he had her children brought in and lifted on the bed where she might see them—suddenly she awoke from that stupor of death—awoke with the soft warm cheek of her little girl pressed to her own, with tears falling on her face, and a voice speaking to her as it had not spoken for so long. Exhausted, feeble, though she was, she knew that the cloud which had overshadowed their life had passed away. And so," says the nurse, invariably, "she just made up her mind to live; and she did."

She recovered. They both recovered, for as she regained her health, her husband's mind grew stronger and clearer, till once again the full joy of life was his. All that he had suffered lay behind him like a dream; a vision of the night which had given place to the cheerful light of day.

It was after this, when he was well and strong as ever, that Logan, who had often been to see him, came one day to tell him some news. Ingram remembered all that had taken place up to the time when he became insane, and was fully aware how he had been deluded into supposing he had discovered gold.

"I have something important to tell you to-day." Logan said. "You once gave me leave to examine your mine, and I have done so."

"I have never been near to the place since—" said Ingram; "since——" He did not finish the sentence.

"I took Polcraft with me, and not far from where you had been working we came on his old mine. The rains this winter have washed away a great deal of earth from the top of the cliff. There has been a tremendous landslip, and close to that——I wonder how you will receive the news."

"It won't affect me much one way or the other now," Ingram said. "I've had the gold fever once. I shall not take it again."

"There we saw signs of gold. Nothing spurious this time; the real thing, the same that Polcraft found thirty years ago. We brought some stone down, and it assays at five or six ounces to the ton. But lately—forgive me for the liberty I've taken with your property—I've had Polcraft and another man working there; and they came on a very rich lode. The more the reef is bared, the better it shows. So, after all, it wasn't a blank you drew in the lottery, but a prize—a splendid one!"

"No," said Ingram, "my reef was a barren one."

"It is the same reef in reality, only you should have struck your pick a few yards further on, and gone a little deeper."

"But I didn't, you see. Besides, this is on Burrit's land. I still consider it his; he returned the money, and more. He must open the mine."

"Burrit says he'll die rather than touch it. You'll find it difficult to move him in this. No, Mr. Ingram, the fates are against you; it is a miner you are destined to be—not a farmer."

"That's so," said Polcraft, who had accompanied Logan. "There's a providence in this, Mr. Ingram, take my word for it. What you've gone through on account of that reef has marked it for your own. Not yours! Whose else, I wonder?"

"Not mine alone," said Ingram. "You, Polcraft, who found gold there thirty years ago; you, Mr. Logan, who have discovered it again; and Burrit, who owns the land, must share with me. From that position I won't move."

Nor did he, although the others insisted that his share should be one-half; the remainder being divided among themselves. Burrit was forced to go in with them on the plea that capital was required, and that some of his gains from the Happy Thought might as well be invested in this new mine. Logan, as Ingram said, could not be spared from the undertaking because he alone understood the science of mining. "And I'll tell you what to call it," Polcraft said at one of their meetings. "I'll christen it for ye—The Called Back; for if ever a man was 'called back,' Mr. Ingram, it's you; and it ever gold came back that I'd found years ago and lost, and that you'd given up in despair, it's this." So the Called Back was started, and the original company were the four—whose names we know. As for the richness of the mine, readers of the Auckland newspapers know that during the first year of its existence it paid in dividends £400,000.

The Ingrams have since left the farm. According to agreement, that has reverted to its original owner, the poetic Briggs, who still lives in the shadow of the wooded hills and by the babbling streams.

Burrit, in spite of all he has done, all that he can say, is still popular in the settlement. People will insist on pointing him out as a pattern of all the virtues. For there is no obstinacy like that of the Public.

Singularly enough, Mrs. Burrit, as soon as her daughter had married and left her, regained her health. "Fact is," the doctor said, "that woman is as strong as a castle. I've always told her so, and she's always hated me in consequence." The doctor, though he manfully congratulated Logan on having won the prize he had himself been seeking for, was for some time sore at heart. But Miss Dora was a particularly bright-eyed, attractive little lady. When she was nursing her sister, and the doctor was calling at the farm every day, they had opportunities for forming something more than an acquaintanceship. So it comes to pass that the doctor is once again building castles in Spain, with this difference—that they have a substantial foundation, and will stand complete in all their radiant glory in a much shorter time than nine years. For Miss Dora also has property in Called Backs.

And so the end. For the rest that concerns our friends, it may not be inscribed here, nor is it to be found written anywhere save in that great book whose pages we unthinkingly turn from day to day.

THE END.

CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.—WHAT TO WEAR IN MARCH.

FROM OUR PARIS AND LONDON CORRESPONDENTS.

I.—FROM OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.

WHEN March winds blow there is generally a touch of Spring in the air, and in the Springtime, a woman's fancy "lightly turns to thoughts of"—millinery. In the vignette, I have attempted to show you what is the newest notion in Paris, and I think you will agree with me that it is altogether novel. The crown is quite open, adorned with jet mounted on wire, and perfectly transparent. The only attempt to cover the head is with the ribbon which forms strings, and then, being laced through the open crown, is employed for a large bow over the forehead, supplemented by ostrich plumes. I notice that in England the feathers on both hats and bonnets are mostly at the back of the head. Not so in Paris where the trimming is in the front and seems inclined to grow in height. The material of which this bonnet is made is fine Tuscan, and straws in minute plaiting are to be much the fashion. This model is bordered at the brim with jet, and the white ribbon strings are narrower than on many other bonnets. I would have you notice that white ribbon with black trimming is a marked feature in the early Spring modes; and the hair at the back of the wearer's head is another point to which I would call your attention. It is twisted carelessly and not at all tightly on the crown of the head; the sides and back are waved. Small curls, neat and not at all frizzy, rest on the forehead, and the hair on the top is either curled or waved. It is a simple style, but requires some nicety of arrangement. I have illustrated two other Parisian modes, and I would have you notice in the accompanying figures the bonnets worn by both. You will see in one of them a bonnet — made for the English market. It is exceedingly flat and has the upstanding tuft of feathers at the back arranged like the plume on a helmet. From the brim falls some beaded vandyke lace. The cloaked figure has a rush bonnet intermixed with rows of the new bark material, trimmed with a deep tone of terra-cotta. This matches the lining to the hood and the lining to the sleeves. The shape of this cloak is quite new; it is particularly voluminous, especially at the back, and it is drawn into the figure by a belt at the waist, while much additional grace is given by long sleeve-pieces braided at the edges, both back and front, and fully gathered on the shoulders. This is one of those exceedingly useful garments which, covering the entire dress, makes a toilette of itself. It can be made in velvet, brocaded silk, or wool, the last being preferable; and it will serve for almost any purpose, for walking, as an evening wrap, or for a carriage.

Gowns are likely to be severely plain, though dressmakers are wont to tell you that drapery is coming in. They merely say what they hope, because if nowadays you possess one well-shaped skirt it is quite easy to copy it any number of times and have them made at home, whereas in drapery much variety and skilled labour are required. The bodice in the accompanying sketch ends at the waist-line, and the skirt either fastens over it or meets it so closely that it appears to be cut

"WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE?"

all in one. It is a style that is most becoming to a fine, well-developed figure, and it is almost impossible to tell where it is fastened; there is no visible fastening either back or front; in truth, it is hooked on the shoulder and under the arm and is moulded to the figure. The stripes are so managed that there appear to be no seams; the back is cut all in one on the cross, with the necessary additional fulness gathered at the waist. The trimming is a satin galon embroidered in chenille; it is used for the collar-band, and for the three mitre-pieces, which are laid on the front of the bodice perpendicularly, the longest point on the left side, the centre one shorter, and the right side shorter still. The sleeves, which almost fit the arm, save that they are slightly large on the shoulder, have no trimming whatever. But I have something else to call your attention to, and that is the close-curled feather ruff round the throat, which is arranged like those worn by Marie de Medici. This suits young women well, and has an advantage as far as older women are concerned in that it hides the lines under the chin. Feather boas grow in favour rather than diminish, but they are less closely curled and are exactly what most women want for the Springtime. I have been investigating lately the nature of the new materials, and I may safely tell you that the leading idea is crape and crépon. So many of the new woollens, though firm and substantial, embodying plenty of warmth, are *crépé* in the weaving and after the weaving. Brocades of the same colour as the ground are well worn, also poplins, and there is a new stuff altogether—that is, new in common parlance—which has the finest cords possible, but I have by me some fabric worn by my grandmother which is not unlike it. People who have to cater for the fashion are doing their best to resuscitate the modes at the beginning of this century, so that its end may be allied to its commencement.

LONDON IN MARCH.

Young girls are wearing most substantial silks for evening, but they are made up to look juvenile by the addition of a liberal trimming of ribbons. The bodies are so arranged that the figure seems swathed with ribbon bands, and at the foot loops of ribbon are superseding ruches. Tulle has always been a most suitable material for evening dresses, but young girls know to their cost that it is an expensive one, with none of the merits of durability. However, now they can no longer complain on that score, and I do not consider that, even at the commencement, silks and satins are more expensive. Sometimes the dresses open down the centre of the back to show a slight gathering of tulle, but more often a contrasting colour of the same material, or satin if the gown is of brocade. There is a new idea which has met with much success, namely, to have a woven brocade of one tone printed subsequently in bouquets of flowers; this looks well and is really durable if the material itself is good, but this is not always the case, and it has brought the particular class of goods into disrepute. Parisian firms are directing their attention to creating many beautiful cloaks of a decidedly new shape. Many of them are copied from Venetian models, and while they fit the figure about the shoulders, simply widen out towards the feet, the only fulness being in the centre of the back, where they are often cut up, and pleated velvet is introduced.

II.—FROM OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENT.

IT is a curious fact that whereas for years Paris has dictated the modes to England, we are now beginning to dictate to the French capital. Our tailors are finding a home there, and Parisians are ordering freely from them. Tailor-made dresses are the leading feature in our English modes. There, without doubt,

we excel and are unrivalled. We seem to have exhausted all the different styles of men's garments in adapting them to women. We have had frock-coats, and even Eton jackets, and now the evening coat is inspiring the dressmaker with fresh fields of conquest. We used to be content with short jockey basques ; now they must be as long as a tail-coat, as you see in the accompanying picture ("London in March"). This particular dress is made of a brown check, with rough knickerbocker spots thrown on a lighter ground, and is trimmed with the new Spanish ball fringe, which is carried round the throat and down the front of the rounded jacket, and in double stripes on the side of the skirt. All skirts now seem to be simple, and this is no exception ; the novelty lies in the additional fulness introduced into the centre of the back.

At this early season simple styles find favour. There seems to be but little trimming worn and only plain gowns, but we shall be better able to judge next month. In the other figure the skirt is trimmed with silk embroidery in relief and of the Empire style ; carried round the coat. This is frequently worked with a mixture of beads. In our modern days no want arises but it is immediately met, and it is possible to buy such embroidery, and appliqué it on to any material. In the present case it is black on a speckled grey and black ground, the cloak is also grey, but richly embroidered with large flowers. Should this prove too costly, a brocade with an important design would answer. We cling to the short three-quarter cloaks, and they have come back to us this Spring in much the same fashion that they left us last year ; the only real difference is in the yoke, and in a disposition to return to the Russian style, that is, the actual cloak opening over a plain front, the arms passing through the sides. In the present instance, a band of fur is carried down the centre of the front and down each side of the cloak, forming a revers at the neck beside the yoke, bands of the fur encircle the throat. A hat is worn with this cloak ; it has a flaring front and a domed crown. It would be a bonnet if it had strings, and many women who are travelling or who would like to diminish the number of their belongings add strings to hats and so convert them into bonnets. At present cowslips appear on nearly all headgear. Narrow satin ribbon is another feature in millinery. It is made up into rosettes, and into loop ruches.

Many of the early spring dresses have the cross-cut trained back and are bound at the hem with a cross-cut piece of contrasting material. This forms the crossing waistcoat in front, which is so arranged that it falls in soft folds that end in a folded waistband, and the long jackets open over this. I do not think they are likely to have any long continuance, but they are found to be useful at this season, as they dispense with any outer covering, save a boa or a loose wrap-cloak for driving.

Tea-gowns are made with a princess back and a flowing train opening over a distinct front breadth, which for useful, inexpensive wear is most generally made of crépon in a lighter tone than the rest of the dress. Crêpe de Chine is the most fashionable material for the entire garment, but then that is only suited to rich people ; it is costly, but it hangs in most graceful folds and lends itself to the soft draping which, even in these days of plain skirts, is the fashion. Velvet is much the mode even for tea-gowns, and then the front is mostly of satin or brocade. There are such very excellent velveteens now that it is encouraging to try how they will look, and it is quite possible to have a really handsome dress in the plain velveteens or in the brocaded ones, which is the last new idea. Tea-gowns have always been made without foundations, so they now adjust themselves to current styles.

No sensible person would advocate cosmetics, but there is no doubt that in the world of fashion a great deal of extra thought is now bestowed on the complexion. Washes and pastes and powders have not been totally ignored ; but more than this, women are beginning to learn the structure of the skin and the benefit of proper manipulation, and we owe a great deal in this respect to our American cousins, who devote special attention to the subject. A simple method they recommend is to wash the face only once in the twenty-four hours with soap, and then to be careful to use the best kinds. After this the skin should be well rinsed and then rubbed with chamois leather until a glow is produced. There is no doubt that as Time goes by we must accustom ourselves to the fact that lines will come, but by directing our attention to their prevention we may lessen their number. Who shall decide where doctors disagree? A great many skin doctors are recommending the use of cold cream, and others friction in the contrary direction from the indentations with eau de Cologne. Before Drawing-Rooms and other State functions take place, those who are expert in face massage have a busy time of it, and certainly they are well rewarded for their trouble. There is no doubt that cleanliness and good health are the best preservatives of personal beauty and that we cannot do better than direct our attention to our health. Forethought and care prevent decay, and when mischief is done it is far more difficult to counteract its effects than to prevent it. The culture of the hand is another new business on which women are spending a good deal of money, but it would be better to invest in a little powder and a wash-leather, and, having cut the nails carefully, to polish them in this fashion.

Long jackets for out-door wear will continue to be worn for some time longer, they are well suited to the present skirts ; but there is one extravagance which women who dress well should incur, namely, a silk petticoat, for it is so difficult for plain dresses to hang well except over this material or the old-fashioned moreen, which helps to keep the skirt out.

White flannel petticoats are always adopted now, but they are embroidered in colours with tiny florets, and many beautiful silk flounces are trimmed.

The latest idea in jewellery is the Louis XV. style, and once more our watches are to be *en evidence*. They are generally suspended to the side by a short chain or ribbon, and to be in accordance with this mode crutch sticks are often carried.

SOUTH FLORIDA SCENERY.

IN THE OPEN WOODS.

THE Lake district of South-central Florida has, up to the present, met with but scant justice from the public, overwhelmed as it is by the double disadvantage of being credited by the ignorant with all the faults possessed by other parts of the State, and of being so extravagantly and outrageously praised by the boomer that people begin to disbelieve even more than is necessary.

In some parts of Florida one sees nothing but uninteresting stretches of flat unbroken pine-woods ; but here the flatness is relieved by the undulations of the sand-hills, and the monotony of the woods is charmingly broken by numerous clear lakes. These afford considerable variety in size and shape, graduating from the one of three miles long, with irregular and picturesque banks, to the little deep-sunk round basin, its edge clipped into regularity, as though with a huge pair of scissors, by the hand of Nature. In many of them rushes and water-lilies grow thickly for a considerable distance from the bank, which is generally wooded down to the water's edge, except where the pines give place to a belt of palmettoes, interspersed with low-growing shrubs. To know how beautiful one of these lakes can look, you must see it at, or immediately after, sunset on a perfectly still evening, with every tree on its banks reflected in its calm depths, and warmed by the crimson and gold of the sky, which will presently pale into delicate opal, and in a short half-hour admit the first stride of the coming darkness.

The open woods have an ever-varying carpet of wild flowers, of which the most beautiful looks like a glorified "meadow-sweet," and one of the brightest is wild sage, growing in great profusion, with its flaming little blossoms of red and yellow.

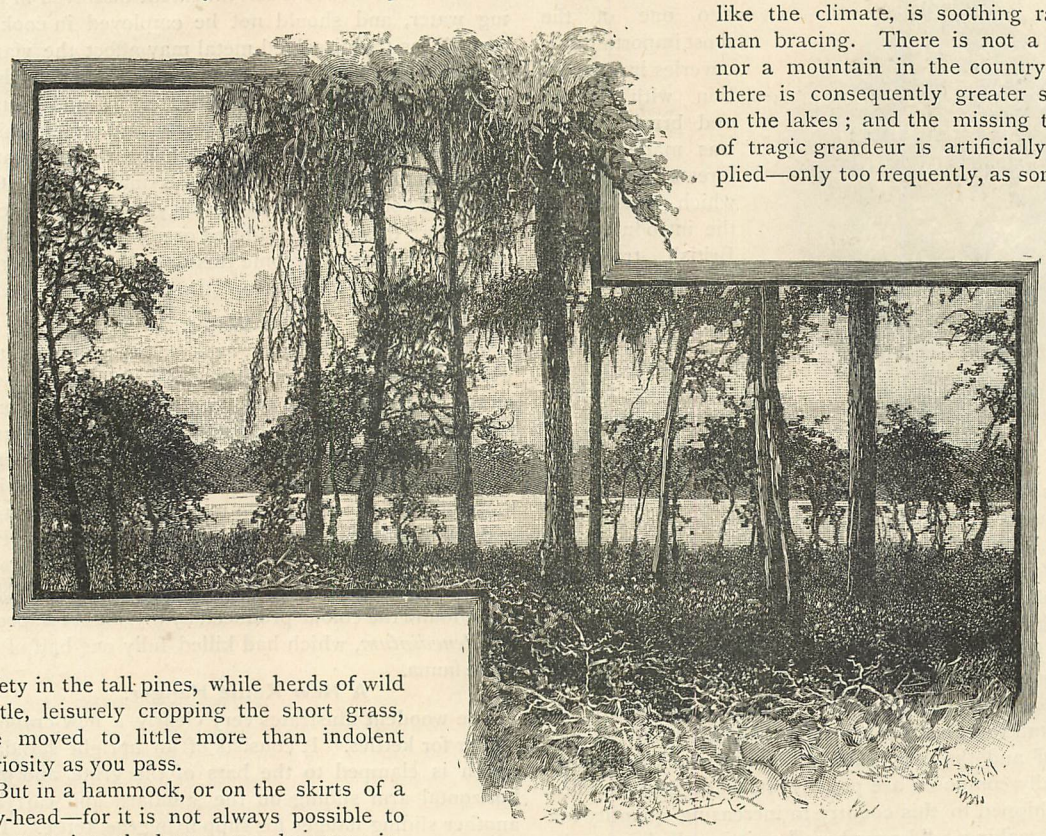
There are tall yellow daisies, that would be the delight and pride of many a fine garden ; and in the occasional patches of "muck-land," little delicate white violets—each an embodied poem. Air-plants

and Spanish moss decorate the trees, which are not all pines, several varieties of oak being very common; and thick bunches of palmettoes are everywhere in evidence. Scarlet-headed woodpeckers fly from tree to tree; and quail, calling danger-signals to each other in voices of soft caution, scurry past so near that you are more startled than they, and then rise in rapid flight, disappearing before you have recovered from your astonishment at their timid daring. Gophers make for their broad-mouthed holes—fearful pitfalls for the feet of unwary horses—and squirrels seek safety in the tall pines, while herds of wild cattle, leisurely cropping the short grass, are moved to little more than indolent curiosity as you pass.

But in a hammock, or on the skirts of a bay-head—for it is not always possible to penetrate into the latter—one becomes inclined to deny any beauty to the open woods, so dull and common-place do they seem in comparison to this almost tropical luxuriance of foliage, these glorious bays, with their exquisite white blossoms (not unlike anemone japonica alba), these tall cabbage-palms, bearing their crests aloft with so grand a dignity, wide-spreading oaks, and beautiful magnolias. Here, where the growth is thickest, is a still more lovely undergrowth; ferns innumerable cluster around the giant roots, and wild vines creep upward, clinging to the strong branches in graceful profusion. Near by, perhaps, is a little creek, clear and shallow, through which the fishes glide at your feet, as if asking to be caught; and its jaggy, mossy bank, broken by gnarled roots, and draped with creeping plants, is a spot from which you can hardly tear yourself to wander farther.

Then, if you want to recover your illusions about the open woods, go back and study them by the light of a huge camp-fire; choose a spot where live oaks predominate, and where Spanish moss is plentiful, and you will be rewarded by some firelight effects that will almost drive the bay-heads from your mind—at least, for the time being; and if you make up your mind to pass the night beside that same fire, you will furthermore enjoy such a sunrise as one, seemingly, never *can* enjoy from the windows of a comfortable house.

The seeker after wild and bold scenery will be disappointed in the South Florida Lake district; for here Nature is at her softest and gentlest, and the scenery, like the climate, is soothing rather than bracing. There is not a rock nor a mountain in the country, but there is consequently greater safety on the lakes; and the missing touch of tragic grandeur is artificially supplied—only too frequently, as some of us know, to our cost—by the magnificent spectacle of a forest fire. The woods are constantly burnt off, in order that the cattle which are turned loose in them may have the benefit of the young grass which springs up after the fire; and much damage is often done on homesteads where the ground outside the fence has not been ploughed to prevent incursions of the devouring element.



"THE FIRST STRIDE OF THE COMING DARKNESS."

Young orange-groves are springing up everywhere; and new settlers' cottages, mostly small and unpretending, are scattered among the picturesque log huts, hastily put up by the first comers, and as hastily deserted when the means presented themselves of building more comfortable abodes. So much, indeed, may be done to render one of these small dwellings an ideal winter resort, that it is really a pity the true—not the imaginary—advantages of the district are not more widely understood.

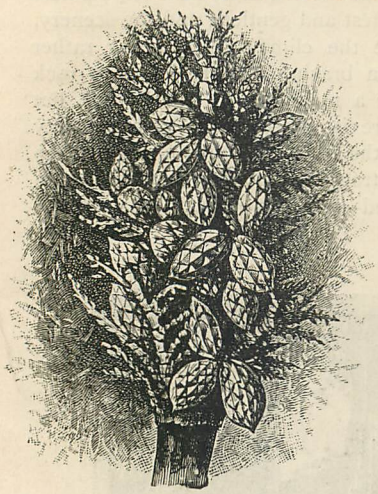
M. PENROSE.

THE GATHERER:

AN ILLUSTRATED RECORD OF INVENTION, DISCOVERY, LITERATURE, AND SCIENCE.

Correspondents are requested, when applying to the Editor for the names and addresses of the persons from whom further particulars respecting the articles in the GATHERER may be obtained, to forward a stamped and addressed envelope for reply, and in the case of inventors submitting specimens for notice, to prepay the carriage. The Editor cannot in any case guarantee absolute certainty of information, nor can he pledge himself to notice every article or work submitted.

The English use of Lagos Bass.



About forty years ago one of the most important discoveries in connection with broom and brush making was made in the forests of Brazil, which resulted in the introduction to British trade of Piassava or bass—a substance that for a long time was supposed to be whalebone—but which in reality consists of the woody fibres from the sheathing bases of the leaf-stalks of two distinct palms, one from Bahia known to botanists as *Attalea funifera*, and the other from Para known as *Leopoldinia Piassaba*. For some years past this substance has been getting scarce, and all sorts of things have been improvised, not only as substitutes but also for mixing with true bass. The most important discovery in this connection, however, and one that bids fair to equal, if not to surpass that of real bass has recently been made in Lagos, where the leaf-stalks of the bamboo palm (*Raphia vinifera*) are cut off and the long elastic fibres of which they were partially composed are pulled out, made into bundles and shipped to this country in increasing quantity for brush making. "Lagos bass," as it is called, not only fetches a high price in the English market, but the supply is practically inexhaustible, for the trees need not be cut down to obtain the fibre, and further they can very easily be extended by a system of planting—and many other palms in various parts of the world which produce a thick leaf-stalk would probably furnish a similar material were they examined for this purpose.

Drawbacks to the Use of Aluminium.

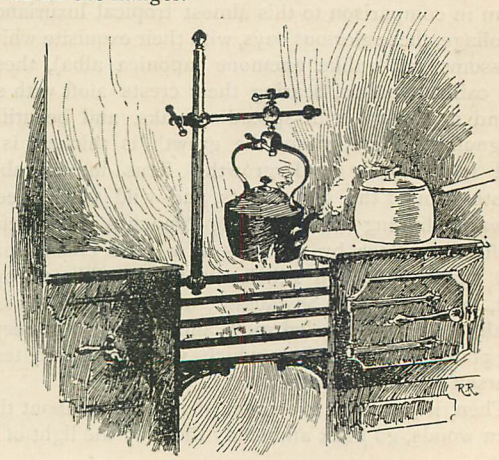
The lightness of aluminium has induced the German Emperor to decree its use for portable apparatus, such as canteens, in the German army, and it seems to be well adapted for the fittings of cameras, surveying instruments, and so forth. Nevertheless it has certain drawbacks which ought to be pointed out. M. Le Roy, a French chemist, has recently shown that pure aluminium (containing 95 per cent. of the metal) is attacked when cold by sulphuric and nitric acids. Herren Lübbert and Roscher, two German chemists, also find that it is to a certain extent dissolved in boiling water, and should not be employed in cooking-utensils, as the dissolved metal may affect the viands. It is also attacked by preserves, pickles, and acids in presence of table salt. Acetic, citric, and tartaric acids, Bordeaux and Moselle wines, and even infusions of tea or coffee attack the metal, hence the application of the metal for army canteens is inadvisable. Carbonate of soda, soap, phenol, salicylic and boric acids, also injure the metal. Gilding or silvering the surface would, of course, overcome this drawback, but there is no good process for electroplating aluminium.

Red Water.

We sometimes hear of "red snow," such as that which covers the crimson cliffs which Sir John Ross saw on the south-west coast of Greenland; and old records, like the annals of Ireland, speak of water being turned into blood. Some have supposed the last phenomenon to be caused by the reflection of a red aurora, but it is more probable that, like the red snow, it was due to a minute organism. Not long ago the water of Port Jackson harbour, Sydney, became the colour of blood, and on investigating the matter Mr. Thomas Whitelegge found the colour produced by myriads of a species of *Glenodinium*, which had killed fully one-half of the shore fauna.

A New Kettle Hanger.

The woodcut illustrates very clearly a new crane or holder for kettles. It consists of an upright standard which is clamped to the bars of the grate, and of a horizontal arm sliding on the standard and carrying another sliding hanger for supporting the kettle. The arm can be made to swing like the old-fashioned crane if required, and a simple gliding hook may be substituted for the hanger.



A COMBINED COUCH AND SETTEE.—FIG. 2.

A Combined Couch and Settee.

The couch shown in the figures is the invention of Lieut.-Colonel Davy, and has the advantage of combining in itself a sofa, two chairs, and a small table or cup stand. Fig. 1 represents it with the chairs and

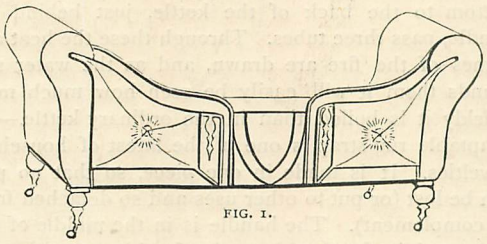


FIG. 1.

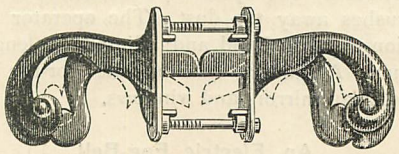
table folded up, making the couch alone; and Fig. 2 with the chairs opened out, and the table spread between them. The combination is, of course, made in different styles to suit a variety of tastes.

Living Greece.

Many people have an idea that both Greek and Hebrew are dead languages; but as a matter of fact they are living tongues. Hebrew more especially is still the language of the Children of Israel, wherever they are found, and it has been brought up to date by the invention or assimilation of scientific and other modern terms. Greek, too, as spoken by the people of Greece to-day, is nearly the same as the Greek of the classics. According to a recent paper by Professor Blackie, read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Greek has altered very little since the time of Corais. The first thirty-one verses of the Gospel of St. John, as published at Athens in 1855, contain only nine departures from the classical type; whereas the corresponding portion of the Romaic version, published 200 years ago, contains twenty-eight. In the higher walks of Greek literature, this purity of style is very marked. In thirty-one pages of Tricoupis' "History of the Greek War of Independence," published in London in 1853, there are only fifteen deviations from the standard of Ancient Greek, while in two chapters of Paspati's "History of the Capture of Constantinople by the Turks," published at Athens in 1890, there are only ten. The standard chosen by Professor Blackie for his comparison, is that of Plato, Xenophon, Diodorus, Lucian, Polybius, and Chrysostom. In the colloquial Greek of common life, there are of course far more deviations from the standard, but even in this there are very few words borrowed from other tongues, and the accented syllable still remains as it was fixed by the Alexandrian grammarians. Recent travellers have also shown that the old Greek race continues in many parts of Greece in tolerable purity, despite the vicissitudes of conquest. Types of face and form are found which fairly startle the tourist by their resemblance to the marbles of the Acropolis or Phigalea. The fair hair and florid cheeks of the children are a proof of their northern extraction, and bear out the tradition of a Hellenic migration from the north or north-east.

The Trigger Lock.

This new lock or latch for doors, which has been adopted in the palace of the King of Sweden, is neat



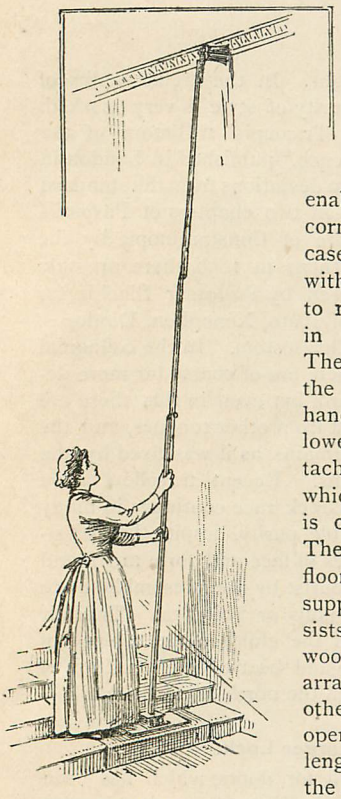
as well as convenient. The engraving shows the lock complete as fitted to a door, with trigger handles and

bolts on each side. The dotted lines indicate the position of a handle and its corresponding bolt in the position of "open"; the pulling of the handle drawing down the bolt. There is no spring to get out of order, and the lock can be used for right or left doors by reversing the bolt.

Thunder and Milk.

Professor Tolomei, an Italian physicist, has inferred, from experiment, that milk curdles during a thunderstorm through the ozone which is formed by the lightning oxidising it, and generating lactic acid. Mr. A. L. Treadwell, of the Wesleyan University, Connecticut, however, has recently found that while the ozone does curdle ordinary milk in this way, it will not do so if the milk is sterilised and kept from contact with unfiltered air. He, therefore, thinks that bacteria, fostered by the heat, have much to do with the curdling, and this conclusion is borne out by the experience of dairymen, who find that, if milk is kept cold, it does not rapidly sour in a thunder-storm.

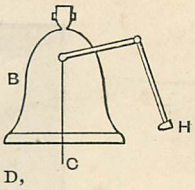
A Handy Wall Brush.

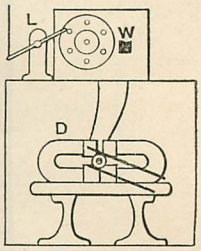


The little device by Mr. C. R. A. Wright, F.R.S., the well-known chemist, will be useful in many a household. It is an oscillating brush or duster for enabling a servant to clean cornices, the walls of staircases, ceilings and so forth, without taking the trouble to mount a ladder or work in an awkward position. The brush is attached to the upper end of a long handle which is fixed at its lower end to a spring attachment, similar to that by which the saddle of a cycle is connected to the frame. The attachment rests on the floor or any other convenient support. The handle consists of two or more rods of wood or metal, which are arranged to glide over each other at the will of the operator so as to shorten or lengthen the rod. When the handle is displaced from the vertical by the operator, it oscillates to and fro and brushes away the dust. The operator keeps it in motion with one hand and adjusts the length with the other. A pad may be substituted for the brush in order to clean mirrors and windows.

An Electric Fog-Bell.

A fog-bell actuated by electricity has been installed at the end of the pier or mole leading into the harbour of Ravenna in Italy. It is the invention of Professor Ravaglia, and consists of the bell, B, with its hammer H, at the top of the tower, and a pulling arrangement, L, worked by a dynamo, D, placed inside the tower. The current for driving the dynamo is derived from a large Daniell battery in the lighthouse about a kilometre from the bell tower and a galvanometer in circuit shows the attendant there that it is flowing, while a telephone enables him to hear the hum of the dynamo. The current from the battery enters the armature of the dynamo or motor, causing it to revolve, and turn a studded wheel or disc, W. The studs strike against the lever L, working it up and down, so as to pull on the chain C, and make the hammer H, strike the bell rapidly, producing a loud and almost continuous note.

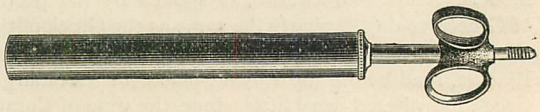




Household Novelties.

A new tubular kettle, just patented, is called by its inventor "The Inkerman." He claims for it that it is rapidly heated, and consequently, brings its contents very quickly to boiling point. It looks, at first sight, very like an ordinary oval tin kettle with a flat bottom. But closer examination shows that from the bottom to the back of the kettle, just behind the handle, pass three tubes. Through these the heat and flames of the fire are drawn, and as the water surrounds them it will easily be seen how much more quickly it is boiled than in the ordinary kettle.—An adaptable rug-strap is one of the latest of household novelties. It is made in one piece, so that no part can be lost (or put to other uses and so detached from its complement). The handle is in the middle of the strap and is fitted with a ring-buckle at each end, while the strap itself with the pins of the buckle will revolve on these rings, so as to be usable either at right-angles to the handle (like an ordinary rug-strap), or in continuation of the handle to serve as a box-strap or for a large bundle, or with one strap each way to go round a package and prevent smaller articles falling out. One end of the strap is fitted with a buckle (which does not prevent its passing through the larger ring-buckle of the handle) for convenience of use in one piece.

A Pneumatic Pump for Cycles.

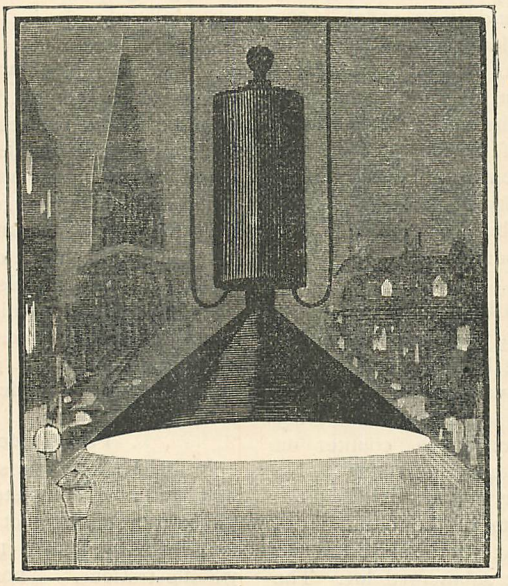


The small pneumatic pump which we illustrate is principally intended for inflating the tyres of cycles, but it can be applied to other purposes. The end of the piston is provided with two finger grips, like those

of a pair of scissors, which give the operator a firm purchase and enable him to pump the air without pressing upon the valve of the tyre. Large sizes of the pump, two feet long, can be obtained for the use of shops and cycle warehouses.

An Incandescent Street Lamp.

The arc lamp, though a splendid light for streets in a clear atmosphere such as that of Paris, is not so valuable in fogs and mists, owing to the absorption of its light by the water vapour in the atmosphere. The incandescent electric lamp is not so sensitive to fogs, and hence the 2,000-volt street lamp which Messrs. Swinburne & Co., the well-known electrical engineers, have introduced, may be very useful in this country. It is shown in the figure, where is shown a small transformer placed over the lamp and its enamelled iron shade. The current of 2,000 volts from the main or distributing leads passes into the transformer by the wires shown, and the transformed current flows from the transformer to the filament of the lamp, heating it white-hot and yielding a light of 32-candle power. While upon this subject we may mention that rolls of iron wire gauze, steeped in chromates, are now used in place of carbon sticks in arc lamps, and give a brilliant white light,



AN INCANDESCENT STREET LAMP.

A Substitute for Nails.

Steel fasteners for woodwork to take the place of nails or screws have recently been introduced. As

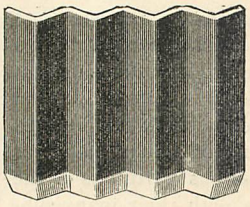


FIG. 1.

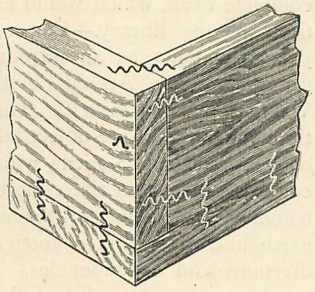


FIG. 2.

shown in Fig. 1 they are small plates of corrugated steel sharpened at the bottom, and they are driven like nails into the wood across the joint to be fastened. Fig. 2 represents the corner of a wooden box made in this way. The fasteners cut into the wood along or across the grain and they do not tend to make it split.

Light and Growth.

Professor L'Arbalétrier, of the École d'Agriculture, Pas-de-Calais, has proved by experiment that the nitrates brought into the leaves of plants by the ascending movement of the sap are soon transformed by the action of light; but that if the plant is kept in darkness, the nitrates accumulate in the leaves and roots, their transformation is arrested, and the development of the plant is seriously checked. These experiments help to explain the fostering of flowers and fruits by the action of the electric light which was the subject of many interesting experiments conducted by the late Sir William Siemens. Market gardeners are beginning to realise a suggestion thrown out some years ago in THE GATHERER before the experiments of Sir William Siemens, and to utilise electricity as well as heat and manure in their cultivation of fruit or vegetables. Mr. W. Rawson, of Arlington, Massachusetts, recently forced a bed of lettuces in a greenhouse 200 feet long by 24 feet wide by keeping an electric arc going from dusk till midnight for a month at a cost of £3. The lettuces were ready for the market a week earlier than usual—in other words, there was a gain of one week in five. We may also add that M. Spechneff, a Russian horticulturist, has grown some fine vegetables by electrifying the ground itself. This is by no means a new idea, having been done as far back as the end of the last century, but the time was never so ripe for it as now. M. Spechneff buried plates of copper and iron in the ground some distance apart so as to make the "earth battery," as it is called, of Alexander Bain, a famous Scotch electrician. These plates were connected above ground by an iron wire and the current generated by the moisture of the earth circulated through the ground between them. In this plot he sowed various seeds and raised exceptionally good crops. A radish, for instance, grew over 17 inches long and $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick; a carrot was $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter and weighed $6\frac{1}{2}$ lb. M. Spechneff thinks that electricity as applied in this way increases the yield of root-crops fourfold, and of ordinary vegetables twofold. There seems therefore to be a substantial gain in "muckin' the land wi' lichtnin'," as the Scotch once termed it.

The Brain of Laura Bridgman.

The case of Laura Bridgman, who lost her sight, hearing, and nearly all sense of taste and smell at the

age of two years, has moved many a reader in the pages of Dickens's "American Notes." In 1878 Professor Stanley Hall by careful tests found that if she had a slight sense of taste, she had none of smell; and, although she could feel mechanical vibrations, she could not hear the loudest noise. Rotation made her giddy. Her sense of touch was thrice acute. In mind she was eccentric, lacking the data of thought, but not the power to reason, and was very emotional. In 1889 she died at the age of 60, much regretted. Her brain has recently been reported on by Dr. H. H. Donaldson of Clark University, who found it to weigh 1,200 grammes, which is a little below the average of the Anglo-American brain, that is to say, 1,275 grammes; but as she was a small woman, it is not abnormally small. There was a defect in the centres known to be connected with the power of speech and in the occipital lobes, especially at the right or visual centre. The temporal lobes were faulty at the tips. Other defects were observable, but there was nothing of a criminal or insane character about them.

An Electrical Log.

An electrical log for measuring the distance traversed by ships has been brought out by a well-known firm of instrument-makers. It is very simple, the vane in the water interrupting an electric circuit every six revolutions, and thus working a counter on the ship, which tells the distance traversed. No battery is required—or rather, the sea itself is the battery, one electrode or plate of the oceanic cell being represented by the iron hull of the ship, and the other by the brass case of the submerged log. The circuit is completed through a wire running inside the log-line.

The Digestibility of Cheese.

Herr Klenze, a German physiologist, has found by experiment that Cheshire and Roquefort are the kinds of cheese most easily digested. Next to these come the following in their order of merit: Emmenthal, Gorgonzola, Neuchâtel, Ramadour, Rotenburg, Mainz, Fromage de Brie, and, last of all, Swiss cheese.

Spurious Coffee.

Coffee beans are manufactured on a large scale in America. They are made of rye flour, glucose, and water, and are intended to pass as genuine beans after being mixed with the real berry to acquire the aroma. It is stated in the *Kew Bulletin* that 20 per cent. of the coffee sold in the United States is artificial. Spurious coffee has also been manufactured in Germany, but was checked by Imperial decree, forbidding the construction of the machines for making it, these having been advertised so largely as to attract the notice of the Government. We may add that artificial almonds for mixing with the genuine ones are manufactured in Holland by a somewhat similar process.

Electricity and the Compass.

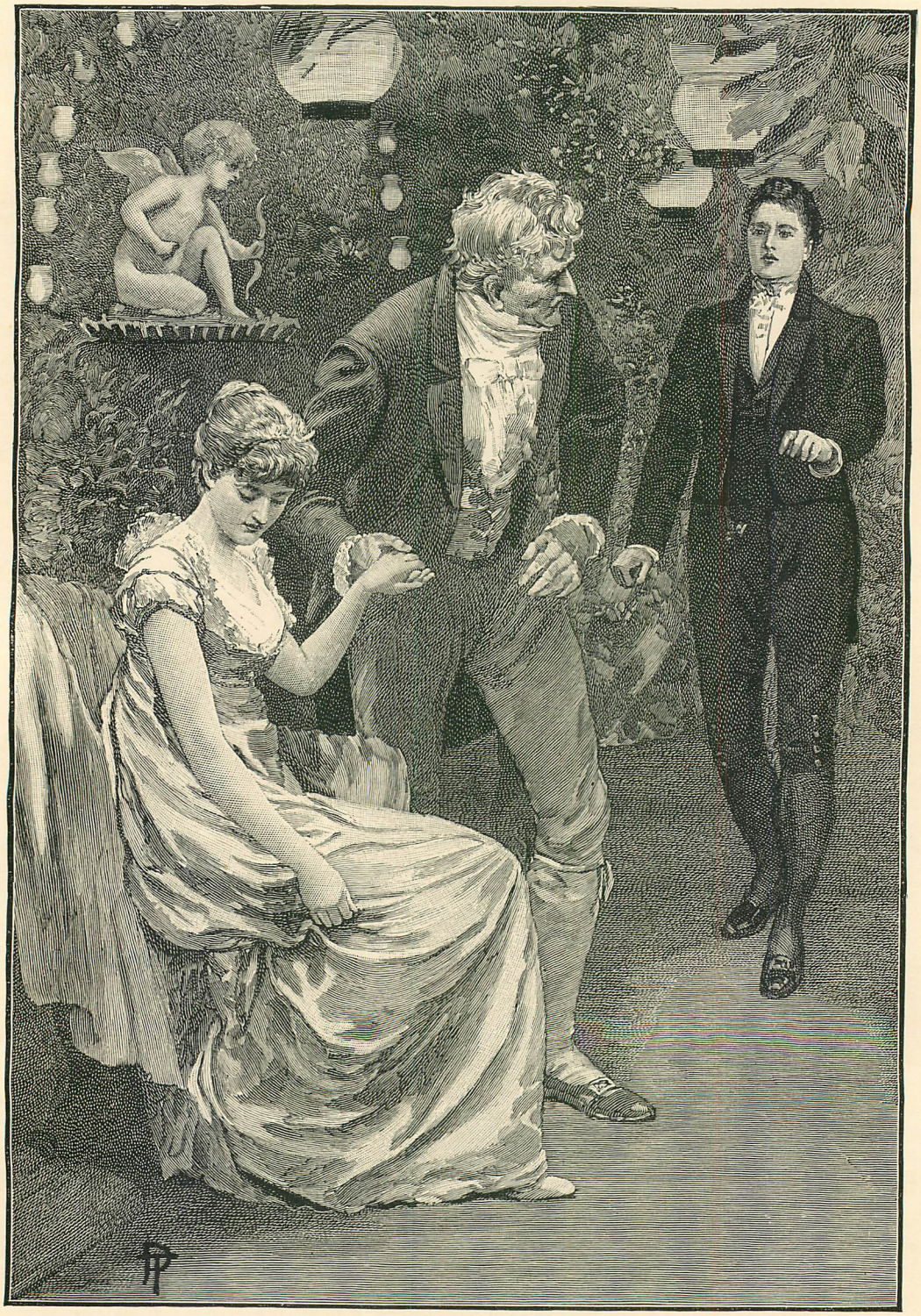
Sir William Thomson, in his recent lecture at the Royal Institution, condemned the practice of supplying electricity to lamps on board ships by means of a single wire, using the iron hull to complete the circuit. He showed that it may cause a deviation of 3 deg. to 7 deg. in the ship's compass, and urged that it should never be employed unless alternating currents are supplied to the lamps. These currents change so rapidly in direction that they do not affect the needle; but the direct currents flowing always in one way are preferable on the score of economy, and their use has no influence on the compass, provided that double wires, going to and returning from the lamps together, are employed.

Vegetarian Cookery.

Our old contributor, Mr. A. G. Payne, whose work must be within the recollection of most of our lady readers, is responsible for "Cassell's Vegetarian Cookery." He explains that the book, although written on strictly vegetarian principles, is suitable alike for vegetarians and for those who are seeking to gradually take more of their food in vegetarian and farinaceous form, and less in the shape of meat. On every ground, economical as well as scientific, we would join in the advocacy of reform in this direction, and in such a reform a guide-book like the one before us is calculated to render good service.

For Students and Others.

Dr. S. R. Gardiner's "Student's History of England" is now complete. How full it is may be gathered from the fact that the one-volume edition contains very nearly 1,100 pages and no less than 378 illustrations. Those who have provided themselves with the first two volumes, which we noticed at the time of their publication, will be glad to hear that the third volume is now ready, and may be had so as to complete the work in the form in which it was originally issued. But probably those who have yet to make acquaintance with the book would prefer the more compact and convenient form of the handsome single volume which is published simultaneously with the third part. All that we have said of the two sectional volumes applies with added force to the complete work, which would form a valuable acquisition to any library.—For use with children and young students, as an introduction to the study of geography, Mr. Arnold-Forster has written "This World of Ours" (Cassell). The principle of his work is the application of the object-lesson to the explanation of the natural phenomena which account for physical conformations, and the coupling of simple historical teaching to account for the various partitions of the earth into individual countries, with their many subdivisions and dependencies. The book will serve as another nail in the coffin of the old dryasdust system of education.—The second volume of "Cassell's Storehouse of General Information" carries this excellent and handy little encyclopædia from "Beast" to "Castro." It is thorough though it is not diffuse, and comprehensive as well as concise, and has the great recommendation of being well and freely illustrated.



(*From a drawing by* PERCY TARRANT.)

THE LADY OF THE MANOR.—III. AN INTERRUPTION.

OUT OF THE FASHION.

By L. T. MEADE, Author of "Engaged to be Married," "Scamp and I," etc. etc.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

THE best-laid plans sometimes come to nothing, and Lady Jane Danby, whose principal object in life just now was to secure a suitable wife for her son Mark, was doomed to see the summer glide into autumn, and even the first tokens of early winter set in before she saw any likelihood of having her plans fulfilled.

Clarissa and Violet Marmaduke were the daughters of Lady Jane's brother; not her eldest brother who inherited the title, but a younger one who had married an immensely rich wife, and whose two girls were the sole inheritors of their mother's fortune. Clarissa was the elder, and Lady Jane thought that she would make an excellent wife for Mark. She had thought this for some time, and had laid her plans with a good deal of diplomacy. The young people had met in Switzerland the summer before; they had not been thrown together, but had got into the habit of falling into each other's company a good deal. They talked and laughed and flirted after the cool fashion in which cousins can flirt, when they are so inclined, and Lady Jane's hopes were high.

Clarissa's father was the owner of a splendid place in Cornwall, and Lady Jane broadly hinted that Mark and Philippa should spend Christmas with their cousins. Strange to say, the hint was disregarded. Lady Jane thought hard during the spring and early summer; it was so necessary for Mark to marry money, and Clarissa was just the girl to bring him distinction in every way. Lady Jane resolved to ask her nieces to Ashton Manor, to get Jessica Power to be one of the party, and by hook or crook to have the young people engaged to one another before Clarissa left her house.

It was not a particularly honourable idea, but Lady Jane's honourable connections were more numerous than her thoughts.

For some reason, which she was never able to discover, Clarissa and Violet promised to come to the Manor, and then day by day and week by week deferred their visit. The excuses they made were excellent. Violet had a bad cold, Clarissa had to accompany her mother to Sweden, but they *would* come—oh, yes!—they wanted to spend a little time with dear Aunt Jane, and dear Philippa and Mark.

At last, early in October, Lady Jane's hopes once more suddenly revived. Clarissa wrote to say she would be with them that evening. She must make her visit alone, for Vi was at Brighton with mother.

"Mark," said Lady Jane, "Clarissa is coming down by the 3.30 train from Waterloo; you'll be sure to meet her and escort her down, won't you?"

Mark, who was fond of Clarissa, looked pleased and interested.

"Of course I'll meet her," he said. "It's rather a bore her choosing such an early train, for I had made an engagement for that very hour; but never fear, mother, I'll be at Waterloo in good time."

Mark left the room as he spoke. Lady Jane turned to Philippa.

"At last!" she said with a sigh.

"Well, motherie," replied that young lady, "if I were you I'd leave 'At last!' alone, for, in my opinion, it has not arrived yet."

"Nonsense, Philippa, you speak without a bit of heart. You don't know how devoured with anxiety I am. All my life I have striven to do my very utmost for Mark. I have denied myself for his sake. When I see him married to Clarissa, I shall be happy."

"Dear me, mamsey, I hope you'll be happy whoever Mark marries."

"What do you mean, miss? *Whoever* Mark marries? He is as good as engaged to Clarissa this minute."

Miss Danby stuck her hands into the pockets of her tailor-made jacket—she was dressed for going out at the time—and, turning on her heel, whistled a bar of "Sweethearts."

"Philippa, your unladylike conduct nearly maddens me."

Philippa stopped whistling at once.

"Dear mother," she answered, "you know I would not really vex you for the world, but how can I help giving vent to astonishment when I hear you say that Clarissa and our Marky are nearly engaged?"

Lady Jane almost sprang from her chair.

"Marky! How can you speak of your brother in that way? It's enough to put Clarissa against him."

"Oh, no, it isn't; she's not that sort by any means. Now, motherie, will you listen to a word of advice from this wild, impertinent, boyish daughter of yours?"

"Well, my love, you know I'm very fond of you, Philippa, although you do try me so often."

"Of course, mother, I know that. Now, do listen! Leave Mark and Clarissa alone. *Don't* throw them together, and *don't* look at them with that expression on your face which says so plainly, 'Oh, my children, come and kneel to me for my blessing!' Just let things alone—*do*, if you want anything to come of this. But I fear, I fear, I fear!"

Philippa ran out of the room, and Lady Jane, left to herself, wept some angry tears. She thought her daughter one of the most trying of mortals.

Mark accompanied his cousin down to Ashton by the 3.30 train. They arrived at the Manor just in time for afternoon tea. Everything was looking its best; the drawing-room was bright with autumn leaves and flowers, a cosy fire crackled on the hearth, and Lady Jane, in dove-coloured silk and soft white lace, looked aristocratic enough to be anybody; the tea equipage was of the choicest, the tea of the most fragrant, and Mark led Clarissa in with all the *éclat* which the occasion demanded.

The weather was cold enough for furs, and Clarissa was clothed up to her delicate fair throat in sable. She had a sable cap on her head, and her eyes, which were large and dark in colour, were full of eager expectation. If she was not in love with Mark, she liked him—even Philippa had to admit that.

The party sat round the hearth, and chatted and laughed. Clarissa gave a ludicrous account of the many reasons which had prevented her coming sooner to the Manor.

"I wanted to come," she said, looking up innocently and affectionately at Mark; "for you know I promised to pay you a visit in your own house this summer. Don't you remember, Philippa, how we planned it all that evening at Lucerne? Oh, yes, I wanted to come, and so did Vi, for that matter, but so many things came in the way, and last of all, there was mother's illness. Oh, dear, oh, dear, the summer has gone, and I have not redeemed my promise!"

"You have done the best you could, my love," said Lady Jane. "You are here now, and we can forget the past while we enjoy the present. We'll keep Clarissa as long as we can, won't we, Mark?"

"I hope so," answered Mark. He was looking at his cousin with undisguised admiration.

The colour mantled into her cheeks under his gaze. She tossed aside her fur cap, and unfastened the warm sables round her throat. She was a very beautiful girl, very bright, fresh, and sweet; it was impossible for all present not to be charmed with her.

At dinner Clarissa wore white, and Mark looked particularly handsome in his evening dress. He did not wear his evening dress on ordinary nights, but he thought it only right to pay this little mark of respect to his cousin.

"She's handsomer than ever," he said to himself; "and I don't think I'm conceited when I fancy that she likes me. Of course it never can be anything but cousinly affection," and Mark gave the ghost of a sigh, and made up his mind to be intensely virtuous during the evening.

He had forgotten to write to Sybil that day; a letter of hers—a sad letter, too—lay unanswered in his pocket.

All these young people could sing, and after dinner they crowded round the piano, and had a gay time. They tried a few trios, then Philippa sang alone, then Clarissa sat down to the piano, and presently she and Mark had the musical part of the entertainment to themselves, for Philippa left the room to attend to the wants of a sick Sunday scholar, and Lady Jane was far too worldly wise to approach the piano.

Clarissa's voice blended beautifully with Mark's, and they sang several love songs with great feeling together.

Just before bedtime, when the four were standing round the fire, and Mark's eyes were travelling very often in the direction of Clarissa's, Philippa made one of her abrupt observations.

"Cook has just told me that she is going out to the pillar-box with a letter of her own. If yours is ready, she will take it at the same time, Marky."

The suddenness of this attack joined to the dancing light of mischief in Philippa's eyes threw Mark completely off his balance.

"Mine ready? What do you mean?" he asked, with an uneasy laugh.

"What I say, my dear boy. You write a letter every night and post it. Cook can save you the trouble to-night if it is ready, that is all."

"It is not ready," he answered. And he turned on his heel. He could have bitten out his tongue the next instant for having avowed the existence of the nightly letter. He felt afraid almost to glance at Clarissa, but when he did look at her again, her face was calm. She had observed nothing.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

MARK had not then the least intention of flirting with his cousin. In his heart of hearts, he was true to Sybil. He loved her better than any girl he had ever met. Sybil without money would be a better wife for him than the richest maiden of his day. Still, Mark was not the most constant of human beings. He had a very fine figure and a handsome face, but he had not a particularly strong order of mind. Clarissa was very pleasant to talk to, very pleasant to look at. He could not help being impressed with the idea that she liked him with something more than cousinly regard. He was not conceited enough to suppose that she was madly in love with him, but he thought that a very little effort on his part would make her so. Clarissa was too handsome and too rich not to have had many offers of marriage, but she evidently had never cared for anyone sufficiently to say "Yes." As Mark watched her face, he used to wonder, in case he said the fateful words, if she would say "Yes" to him.

Lady Jane had sufficiently profited by Philippa's advice to leave the young people to themselves. She felt happy during these days, for although Mark did not mean to flirt, he was undoubtedly attentive, and that other affair about which she had once received some dark hints, that "common kind of girl" who lived somewhere in Rosemary Gardens, about whom she had written to Jessica, surely Mark had forgotten all about the girl long ago.

When Clarissa had spent nearly a week at the Manor, the letters were brought in one morning as usual at breakfast-time. Philippa had two, Mark one, which he slipped into his pocket, and Lady Jane received three or four as her share of the post-bag. Clarissa had no letter to read that morning, and she noticed, with a kind of lazy wonder, how Mark

popped his out of sight, and how Lady Jane and Philippa devoured theirs.

Meeting Mark's eyes, she bent forward and spoke :

"How unlike a woman you are, Mark," she said. "Women can't bear to leave their letters unread."

Mark coloured as she addressed him.

"Your letter was a bill, wasn't it, Marky ?" suddenly exclaimed Philippa, raising her eyes from her own epistle. Then she continued, without listening for his reply—

"Oh, motherie, Clarissa and Mark, do listen ! I nave got such a delicious letter from dear old Jessica Power. Her boarding-house is started, and she encloses me a prospectus. Here it is :—'No. 80, Rosemary Gardens. Boarding-house for girls,' and here is the tariff of terms. I tell you what it is. I mean to go to that boarding-house. Clarissa, suppose we go up there together? You know you want to do some shopping. Suppose we go to-morrow, and spend two or three days ? What is it, motherie? Do you object ?"

"Of course I do, my dear. Do you think my brother would permit Clarissa to go to a common boarding-house? Boarding-houses are always low, second-rate kind of places."

"But this is not low, nor second-rate, nor common. This is Jessica's boarding-house, her own little pet investment, paid for and provided out of her own money, and the girls who manage it are quite ladies, as good as *I* am, Jessica says."

"Well, my dear, well, but I don't think Clarissa's father would wish her to go to any place of the kind."

"I am sure he would not," murmured Mark, whose face had suddenly grown very white.

"I don't think father would mind in the least," interrupted Clarissa. "Neither he nor mother are at all faddy, and they like us to go about and see life."

"Besides," continued Philippa, "Jessica says that no girl will be admitted to the boarding-house without an introduction, and that the sole qualification necessary is that she shall be a lady. Poverty is nothing, Jessica says, but gentle ways and gentle birth are essential."

"Just like Jessica," murmured Lady Jane. "She will probably fill her house with genteel paupers."

"Well, mamsey, we'll pay, if we go. *Do* let us, *do* say yes—just for two days, mamsey, love ! Clarissa, come, come and coax with me. You know mother can refuse you nothing !"

"Do let us go," said Clarissa in her soft voice.

Lady Jane looked at her pretty niece in a sort of bewilderment. Then she glanced at her son.

Mark shook his head, and formed "No" with his lips.

"Mark agrees with me," said Lady Jane.

The colour deepened all over Clarissa's face when her aunt said this.

"I am of age," she said, pouting her rosy lips, "and I know my own father and mother would let me go. If you wish, Aunt Jane, I can telegraph to them."

"Oh, no, my love, not if you are sure, and your heart is set on this."

"Of course her heart is set on it, mamsey," interrupted Philippa, "of course we'll go, we'll both go. It will be a delicious new experience. Put on your hat at once, Clari, and we'll run up to the village and send a wire to old Jessica."

"Philippa, you get more slangy in your expressions every day !" exclaimed her mother.

"I don't care : I must let off steam somehow ! Now then, Clarissa, pet, we'll fly off and get this affair arranged in double quick time."

The girls rushed out of the room.

"How impulsive Philippa is," Lady Jane said, looking at her son.

"Yes," he answered, in an abstracted manner. Then he added, "You're not going to let the girls go to that boarding-house, mother ?"

"I don't know," she said. "How am I to prevent it ? Clarissa, as she remarks, is of age, and your uncle George, her father, always had eccentric views about all men being brothers, and that sort of thing ; provided the boarding-house was respectable, he would be sure to let her go, and if we oppose her she will only telegraph for leave. As she goes, Philippa may as well go with her, eh, Mark ?"

"Certainly," replied Mark. He went to the door, turned the handle, hesitated, and came back again.

"Mother," he said, "you are clever. Can't you *manage* to keep the girls from going to 80, Rosemary Gardens ?"

"My dear Mark !"

"The fact is, I know the place."

"You know it ? But this boarding-house of Jessica's has only just been opened."

"I know the people who live there."

"Do you ? Who are they ?"

"Their name is Ross. Their father——"

"I know," exclaimed Lady Jane, impulsively. Then she remembered some rumours she had once heard about Mark, and wondered that she could ever have doubted her boy.

"My dear fellow," she said, "I dare say the daughters of this unfortunate man are in themselves blameless, and if Jessica has taken them under her protection—Well, well, Mark," seeing a cloud still on her son's brow—"I cannot too much admire your anxiety about your sister, and your "— she looked up in his face—"cousin," came out slowly and with meaning. "If I can keep the girls at home, I will, Mark. And now, my son, let me ask you one word. You know my wishes, my longings and desires. Have you made any progress ?"

"No, no, none. I wish you would get this idea out of your head, mother."

He spoke crossly, and left the room in by no means a good temper.

If Mark had told his mother to dismiss the idea she had suggested, he by no means banished it from his own head. Through the day it stayed with him, and the more he thought of it the more did it fascinate him. Still in his heart did he love Sybil. "If they both had money, I would not hesitate a minute which I should choose," he said ; "but Clarissa is very

sweet—and these duns—they do press me awfully, and how am I ever going to confess the fact to the mater that I am hundreds of pounds in debt?"

Mark spent a very uncomfortable day. He went to town, but found it impossible to turn his attention to dry treatises on law. He spent but a short time at his chambers, and returned by an early train to Ashton. Clarissa was walking by herself in the garden. He could not help joining her, and looking at her a good deal oftener than he ought, and coming to the conclusion that, in her way, she was just as pretty as Sybil.

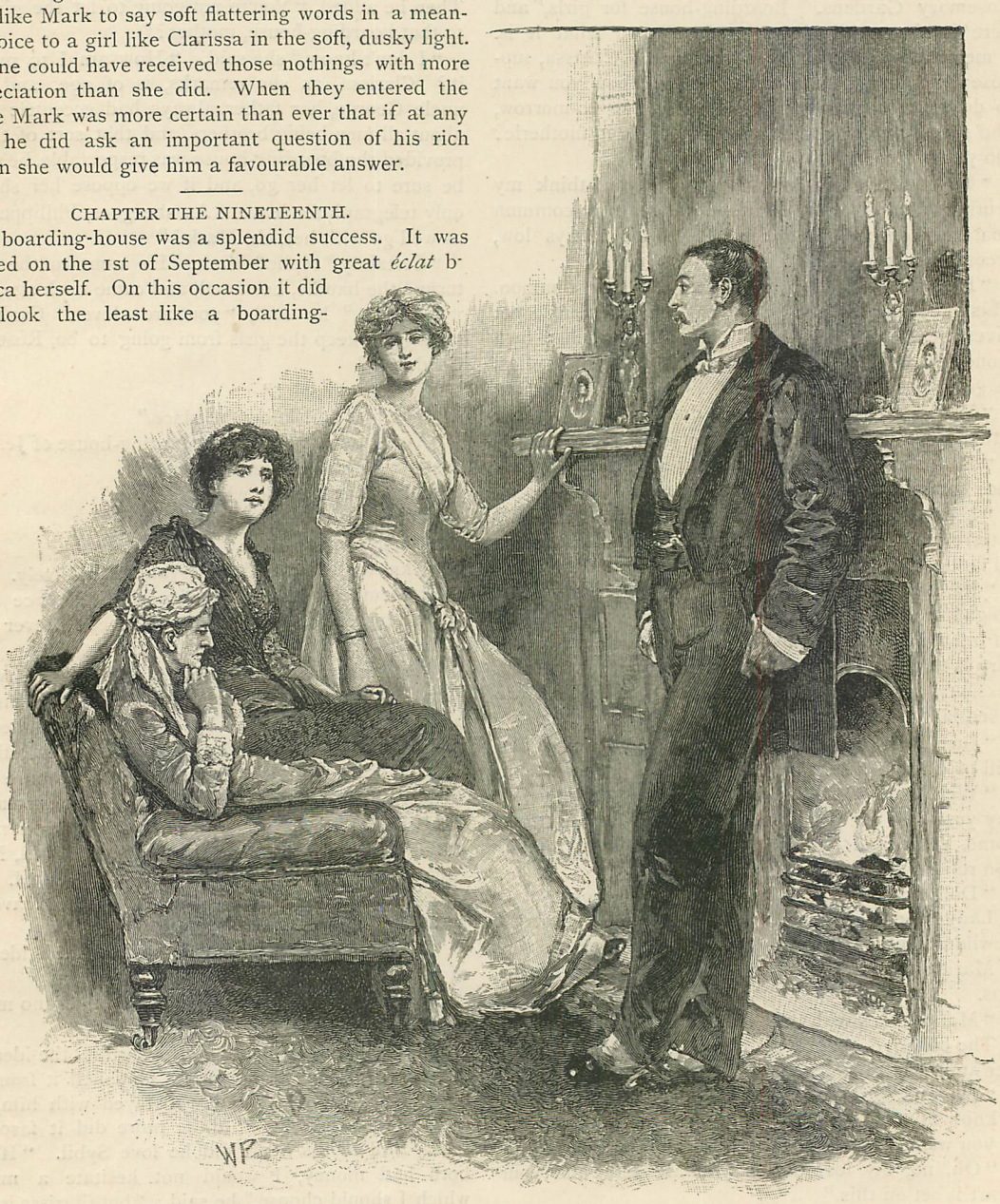
It was growing dusk, for the days were very short, and nothing in the world was easier than for a young man like Mark to say soft flattering words in a meaning voice to a girl like Clarissa in the soft, dusky light. No one could have received those nothings with more appreciation than she did. When they entered the house Mark was more certain than ever that if at any time he did ask an important question of his rich cousin she would give him a favourable answer.

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

THE boarding-house was a splendid success. It was opened on the 1st of September with great *éclat* b- Jessica herself. On this occasion it did not look the least like a boarding-house. The window-boxes were all full of fresh flowers; the balconies were laden with them, and on the balconies the girl-boarders stood, and talked to one another, and wondered what strange thing had happened to them, and how they could possibly manage to attain for thirty shillings a week such an artistic and luxurious home.

The boarding-house with its bright young hostesses soon became popular, and, as Jessica had predicted, was quickly filled from attic to cellar. The prices charged varied according to the floors, girls who had very small means being accommodated with bedrooms in the bright, freshly-painted attics for a pound a week.

"And there will be no extras," Jessica insisted.



"PHILIPPA MADE ONE OF HER ABRUPT OBSERVATIONS" (*p.* 258).

"You understand me, Maggie, I am quite resolved on that head. We will name a price to each girl and stick to it. And remember, when the evenings get chilly, each of the girls is to have a fire in her bedroom, and there is always to be a supply of fresh candles, and a book or two lying about; for I want the lasses to regard their bedrooms as real homes where they may rest, and be as happy as circumstances will allow them."

Of course with these rules governing the establishment, and love and peace, and a sense of pleasant, homely luxury which pervaded the very air of the house, it could not help being more than popular.

Maggie, to whom all the letters were addressed, had a great many more applications for her rooms than she could accept. She felt quite sorry to have to write so very often in reply to the pleading letters, that the house was full, quite full. Jessica Power talked seriously of buying the next house as soon as ever she had the chance, and so adding to the capacities of the boarding-house.

"I am truly sorry for the girls who can't come," Kitty said. "I feel convinced that no girls who are away from their real homes could be happier than those who live with us. These fresh country girls with all their lives before them are too delicious, their enthusiasm quite carries me away."

"Of course you have no enthusiasm yourself, Kitty," remarked Betty in a sly voice.

"None, Betty, in comparison with the Hopkinses, and the two Macjones girls, from Wales. Gladys Macjones told me last night that she quite expected to be initiated into the mysteries of art in three months; and Mary posted a sonnet to the Editor of the *Nineteenth Century* a couple of days ago. She hopes Gladstone will notice it. Oh, they expect so much,—those Hopkinses and Macjoneses—nothing—nothing in all the world seems impossible to them."

While the girls were chattering, Miss Power walked into the room. She had now got accustomed to crossing the square, without Susannah's company. She had only thrown a shawl over her head to come over to No. 80, and now she tossed it on the sofa of Maggie's little private sitting-room.

"Well, Kitty, what are you all smiles about?" she asked.

"We are so happy," replied Kitty. "The boarding-house is a merry sort of place, and the girl-boarders are full of interest."

"But we miss little Nineteen-year-old," remarked Miss Power. "The place would have been still merrier if she had not left us. Do you often hear from the child, Margaret?"

"Yes," replied Margaret. "She writes regularly once a week."

"I trust she is happy?"

"I hope so," answered Margaret. "She writes cheerfully enough, and makes us laugh over Uncle David's funny ways. Still——" Margaret was about to add something further when one of the servants brought in a telegram. She opened it and read its contents, and then handed it to Miss Power.

"We cannot take them in," she said; "the house is quite full."

Miss Power read the telegram over twice. The first time her lips twitched, the second time her eyes smiled.

"Why, Maggie," she said, "this telegram is from Philippa Danby—Mark Danby's sister—and the girl she wants to bring with her is Clarissa Marmaduke, one of the greatest heiresses of the day, and niece to the Earl of Silchester."

"Well," repeated Maggie, "I am sorry, but the house is full from attic to cellar. You don't want me to turn anybody out, do you, Jessica?"

"Yes, my love, I do. I would not refuse Philippa's request for all the world. Philippa is one of the best girls I know, and it is too rich her wanting to come here. It is my belief, Margaret, and Kitty, and Betty, that that scoundrel Mark has never told his sister or his mother of his engagement to our little Nineteen-year-old. Won't we take it out of him just! My dear girls, I wouldn't be engaged to a man like Mark Danby for all creation, but as Sybil is his affianced wife, and as, for some incomprehensible reason, she likes him, we may be able to do her a good turn when those girls come here."

"But the house is full," repeated Margaret.

"Yes, yes, my love. Now the question is, who can we best turn out? Where do the Macjoneses sleep, Betty?"

"They have the back attic between them," replied Betty. "Their two tiny beds are stowed away under the roof. I must say they have a rather confined space, but they enjoy themselves immensely, and then you know we only charge them fifteen shillings a week each."

"I will ask the Macjoneses to sleep at my house for two or three nights," replied Miss Power. "Susannah shall get a room ready for them; it shall be on the drawing-room floor."

"But, Jessica, we cannot ask Miss Danby and that other girl to sleep up in the back attic. It really sounds too dreadful."

"My dear, it does not sound dreadful at all, and Philippa will enjoy it."

"But could you not ask her and Miss Marmaduke to use your bedroom on the drawing-room floor?"

"No, my dear, no. What novelty would there be in that to those girls? Let them have the attic; they will be enraptured."

So Maggie had to fill in her telegram in the following way:

"House full. Only a clean back attic with two beds to spare. Shall I reserve it?"

In the course of a couple of hours a second telegram was received at 80, Rosemary Gardens. It ran as follows:

"Will take the back attic. Expect us to-morrow evening.—PHILIPPA DANBY."

At the appointed hour Philippa and Clarissa made their appearance. Clarissa looked a little shy, Philippa gaily expectant. Clarissa was accustomed to the best hotels; to suites of rooms on the first floor, engaged in

advance. She would have been quite cool and composed and uninterested in one of these rooms, but the back attic, with the little bed pushed away under the roof, made her feel shy.

"Good gracious, my love," exclaimed Philippa to her cousin as they stood in their humble room and looked around them. "Did you notice that all the girls in the house are dressed for dinner? I met groups of them on the stairs, all rigged out in diaphanous drapery. Are they giving a party here? What is going to happen?"

"I have not brought a stitch of anything for the evening," said Clarissa. "It never occurred to me it was necessary in a boarding-house, and Aunt Jane did snub this one so. And then that telegram offering us the back attic."

"My dear, the back attic is delicious, heavenly; we shall see half over London from that dormer window. But now, Clari, about our dress!"

"I have nothing, Philippa—nothing whatever. I am clothed from head to foot in blue serge, and I have got a brown serge in my portmanteau, in case this one gets soaked, if I'm caught in a shower. That is all."

"Have you got a bit of jewellery—a gold locket and chain, or anything of that sort?"

"No, this dull steel brooch fastens my dress at the throat. I did not even bring my watch-chain, for I slipped my watch, for convenience, into my leather bracelet."

"It was the 'back attic,'" ejaculated Philippa. "I also am in blue serge, and my watch reposes in a bracelet. Well, there is no help for it; let's brush out our hair, wash our hands, and go down. I hope there is a good dinner, for I am so hungry."

The two girls tripped downstairs hand in hand. Philippa was tall and slender; her figure was very neat, her black hair crisp and wavy; her pale face redeemed from plainness by the vivacious expression of her sparkling mischievous black eyes. Clarissa was small. Her complexion was very fair, but her eyes were large and dark, and seen by daylight had a peculiar red-brown in their colouring, which gave them a particularly bright and lovely expression. Her hair was fair, and had also a very faint dash of red about it. Clarissa was pretty enough even to carry off the effect of her heavy serge dress.

Kitty, in white cashmere, came forward to meet the two girls when they entered the drawing-room. Kitty had not at all the manners of the ordinary boarding-house.

"It was sweet of you to come," she said, taking a hand of each. "I was dreadfully distressed at putting you into the back attic, but Jessica said you would not mind. Forgive me, I don't know one of you from the other. Which of you is Jessica's friend?"

"I am," replied Philippa. "I have known Jessica since I was quite a small tot; she is a dear, generous, eccentric old soul, and I admire her immensely. Miss Ross, may I inquire why you are gazing so fixedly at me?"

"You are like your brother," replied Kitty. "Like him, yet different—very different." Here she sighed.

"Good gracious! You don't tell me you know Marky?"

"Oh, yes, we all know Mr. Danby very well. What part of the room would you like best to sit in? I beg your pardon—I don't quite hear what you are saying?"

"You are welcome to listen to the solitary sentence I let escape my lips, Miss Ross. I was saying to myself, 'Nuts to crack with Marky, by and by.' You will perceive by the style of my speech that your delightful back attic suits me perfectly. Now what were you good enough to ask me a minute ago?"

"What part of the drawing-room would you like best to sit in?"

"Clarissa and I will choose a little humble corner where we can sit unobserved. We had no idea you were entertaining company to-night."

"Nor are we—oh, you mean that the girls are in light dresses. We who live here generally put on something cool in the evenings. It is refreshing to change our heavy dresses, and good economy besides, for we can wear out our old summer frocks in that fashion."

"I am so sorry that my cousin and I must appear in these heavy serges."

"Oh, it does not matter at all!"

"We thought yours was an ordinary boarding-house."

"Which it is not," replied Kitty, her eyes sparkling. "Here is a very cosy corner, Miss Danby, and may I introduce my sister Betty to you? Betty, here is Miss Danby, and here is Miss Marmaduke."

"I am sure you must be hungry, both of you," said Betty, when she had shaken hands, and found out for herself the likeness between Philippa and Mark.

"I am starving," replied Philippa. "I won't answer for Clarissa; she must speak for herself."

"Well, the dinner-gong will sound in a moment," replied Betty, "and after dinner will come our pleasantest time."

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

THERE was a great sameness about life at Shortlands. Breakfast was at eight punctually, lunch at one, tea in the drawing-room at four, and dinner at seven. These four meals constituted the pillars of the day. They were colossal pillars, and could never be moved a quarter of an inch in any direction. Trains might be missed, relatives might die, hearts might be broken, but at one to the minute Mr. and Mrs. Ross must seat themselves at the head or foot of the luncheon table; Muriel, smooth and composed, must occupy one side, Sybil, crossed and ruffled, the other. Luncheon was but a sample of all other meals, the knell of doom must indeed have gone forth before these important ceremonies could be disorganised.

The method observed in connection with the meals was carried into all the minor details of the household. At Shortlands there was not only a place for everything and everything in its place, but also a time for everything and everything done in its own time. For instance, Muriel's walking hour was from eleven to twelve every day, Muriel liked to be out at eleven,

and to be wiping her feet on the mat as the great eight-day clock in the hall struck twelve. From two to half-past three she gave herself another hour and half of exercise, either on foot or in the brougham.

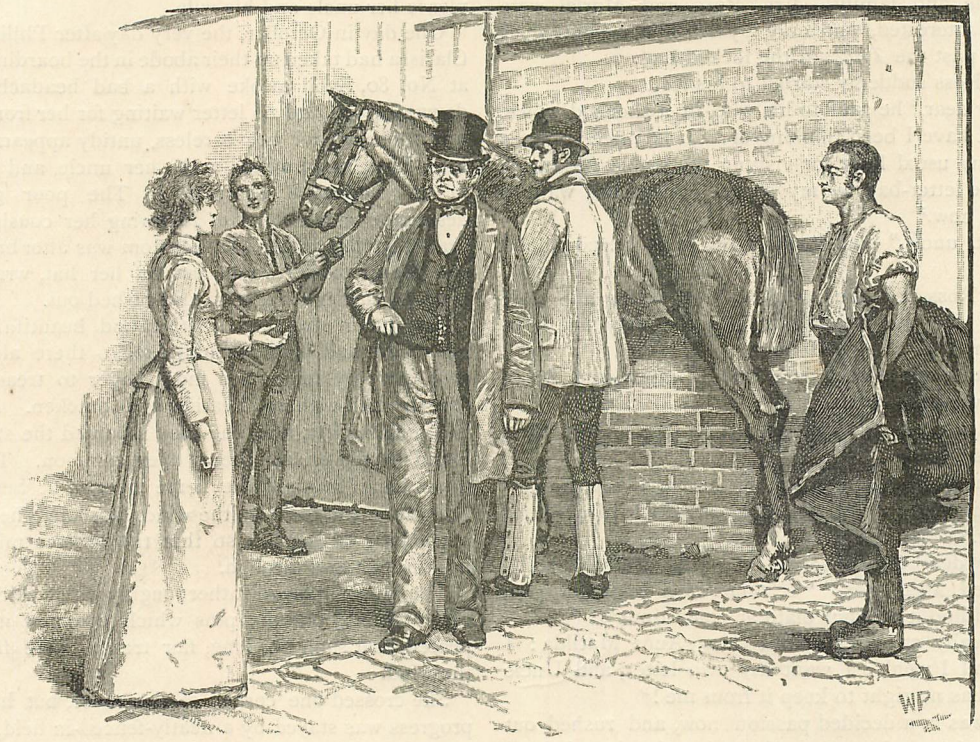
Every moment of this young lady's day was planned. She studied geology and history from nine to ten; from ten to five minutes to eleven she practised. From five past twelve to five minutes to one she made garments for the poor. After four o'clock tea she either read aloud to her mother or embroidered pocket-handkerchiefs for herself; after dinner she resumed her embroidery. The embroidering of her own name on pocket-handkerchiefs seemed to Sybil to be the only light occupation in which Muriel indulged.

One day passed exactly like another, except that on wet days Muriel took her constitutional exercise in the picture gallery, where she diverted her mind from frivolous thoughts by committing to memory large portions of epic verse. The evening was the only time when the solemn routine of life at Shortlands was allowed to be broken.

On a certain Thursday evening each fortnight Muriel bade her parents a dutiful good-night as the clock struck nine, and tripped out of the room.

"Muriel goes to have her hair washed," Mrs. Ross remarked to Sybil. "She has to sit by the fire afterwards, and have it properly dried. It takes just an hour to dry Muriel's thick hair."

On every second Thursday Muriel's hair was washed. On the alternate Thursday also this good girl absented herself just an hour before the family retired to rest. On this occasion she descended to the housekeeper's room to put the coachman through his letters. As far as Sybil could make out, the coachman never seemed to advance beyond this rudimentary branch of education. This was certainly owing to no fault of Muriel's, who gave him his full hour, no more and no less, of instruction every fortnight.



"MR. ROSS FELL BACK A FEW STEPS IN HIS ASTONISHMENT" (*p.* 264).

Into this placid home, Sybil, the unruly, the undisciplined, the untamed, suddenly found herself plunged. At first the routine life had a paralysing effect upon her. She was swept along on its current, she recognised its power; she made violent efforts to conform herself to Muriel's ways; she tried to brush her frizzy hair smooth, she made valiant efforts to read dull books, she heroically listened to Uncle David's stupid stories, and to Aunt Matilda's ceaseless talk about her waifs and strays.

This kind of thing lasted for a time, then Sybil's patience burst its bounds; she electrified this excellent family by displaying a decided fit of childish bad temper and naughtiness at the breakfast-table. The special incident which showed Sybil in her true colours took place at the breakfast-table. The letters were brought in by Jonathan, and placed in a locked bag by Mr. Ross's side. With all the method of the house there was an aggravating want of method in the

opening of the letter-bag. Mrs. Ross and Muriel scarcely ever held communication with the outer world, and Mr. Ross who thought his letters could keep until he had time to attend to them, often kept the bag locked until he returned from his tour round the farm.

Now, however, eager eyes watched for the unlocking of that bag, for Sybil's almost daily letter from Mark was the sole bit of sunshine in her present dreary life.

One morning, when she had been nearly a fortnight at Shortlands, Mr. Ross kept the locked bag beside him while he read a long account of a shareholders' meeting out of the previous day's *Times* aloud to his wife and family. Mrs. Ross and Muriel were deeply interested, and only Sybil's hungry blue eyes looked past the *Times* at the locked bag.

Mr. Ross suddenly started to his feet.

"My dear," he said to his wife, in a shocked voice. "What have I been thinking of? It is three minutes since my usual hour for visiting the stables. Muriel, take the letter-bag to my study. I will not wait to open it now."

"But, uncle," exclaimed Sybil, in a piercing, loud tone.

Mr. Ross left the room without taking the least notice. He was a little deaf, so he may not have heard her.

"I must run after Uncle David," exclaimed Sybil, "for I want my letter."

She turned her flushed, impatient face to Mrs. Ross as she spoke.

"I know there's a letter for me in the post-bag," she continued. "I'll run and ask Uncle David for the key."

"My dear Sybil, you'll do nothing of the sort," answered Mrs. Ross. "If there is a letter for you, you will find it on your plate at lunch-time."

"I really can't wait until then, Aunt Matilda: I can't and I won't; I want my own letter, and Uncle David has no right to keep it from me!"

She was in a decided passion now, and rushed out of the sober dining-room, slamming the door behind her.

Hatless she pursued her uncle into the stable-yard, and touched him on the shoulder, as he was examining a sick horse in the company of a neighbouring vet.

"Uncle David, will you give me the key of the post-bag at once?"

"Eh—what? Sybil! What are you doing here?"

Mr. Ross fell back a few steps in his astonishment, but here he was assailed by such a piteous look of entreaty in two tearful blue eyes that his heart relented a little. The vet. and the two grooms gazed at Sybil in open-eyed admiration, and had Mr. Ross remained obdurate, it is quite possible that key might have been wrenched from him by violence.

As it was, he fumbled in his pocket and said—

"There, my dear: I suppose your aunt sent you for it," and Sybil danced back to the house with her prize. She secured her letter, but Mrs. Ross and Muriel were both deeply offended, and from this moment her letters were watched and noticed. Sybil was asked who her daily correspondent was. She stoutly refused to disclose his name, and now her life from being only passively, became actively, unhappy.

Muriel, although such a placid, gentle, apparently good sort of girl, could be malicious and disagreeable in small ways. She made sly and nasty allusions to Sybil's daily letters, and, above all things, she taunted her when they did not come. This was the hardest thing of all to bear, for Mark's letters were less frequent and less affectionate than of old. Sybil felt herself sinking into a state of despair, and very soon despair made her reckless. She no longer cared to please her uncle and his wife.

One day in October, the very day after Philippa and Clarissa had taken up their abode in the boarding-house at No. 80, Sybil awoke with a bad headache, went downstairs, to find no letter waiting for her from Mark, was reproved for her careless, untidy appearance by Mrs. Ross, was frowned at by her uncle, and taunted in an undertone by Muriel. The poor girl felt desperate, and, instead of following her cousin to the drawing-room as her usual custom was after breakfast, she ran up to her room, put on her hat, wrapped a plaid about her shoulders, and rushed out.

The moor stretched inviting and beautiful before her. She had been forbidden to go there alone, but that fact only made her more eager to tread under foot the half-withered heather and bracken. Nobody was noticing her, and she soon mounted the stile, and found herself on the breezy open common. The wild untamed air soothed the fierce hunger at her heart. She ran in the teeth of the wind, loosening her plaid, and taking off her hat, so that the breezes might fan her through and through.

The breezes played rather roughly with Sybil's bright hair. One by one the pins which confined it disappeared, and soon her long, fair tresses were flying in the wind.

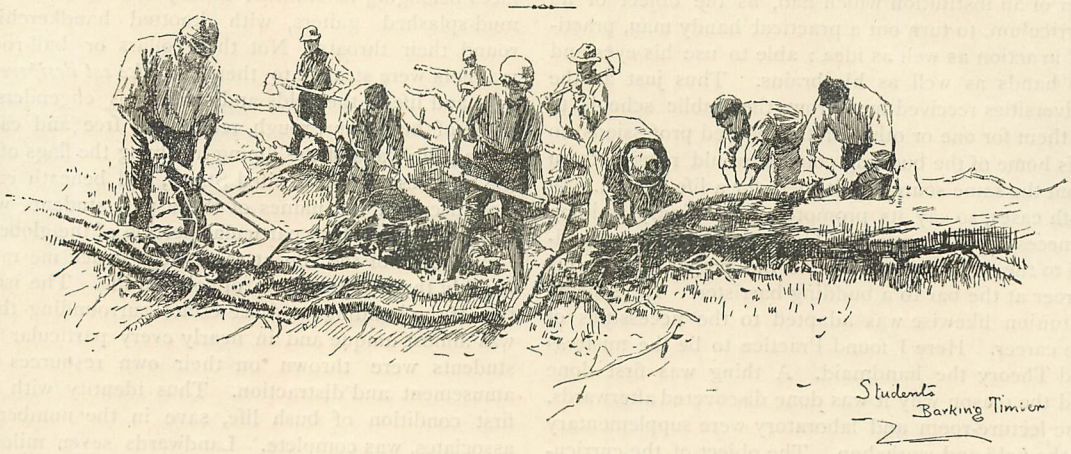
She crossed one corner of the moor, but here her progress was stayed by a neatly-fenced-in field, which, several years before, had been stolen from the common by a crafty farmer. There was a path leading right through this field, and a stile opening into the path. At the other side of the field the great common stretched miles and miles away. Sybil wondered if she could reach the spot where the sky now met the earth. Three gaunt trees stood upon the verge of the horizon. They would act as landmarks; she would make for them.

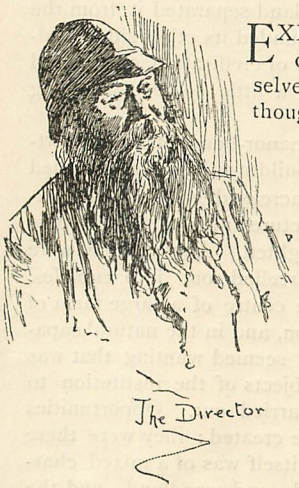
She passed through the stile, and began to run swiftly across the green field. It belonged to a certain Farmer Bates, and Sybil did not know that his prize bull was its present lord and master. The girlish flying figure, with golden tresses swept back by the wind and a red plaid thrown over her arm, was much too picturesque an object not to excite his majesty's curiosity.

The animal—Jupiter by name—did not appreciate people who fled through his kingdom carrying red shawls. He lowered his head, and prepared to do battle with his adversary.

END OF CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

COLONISTS IN EMBRYO.





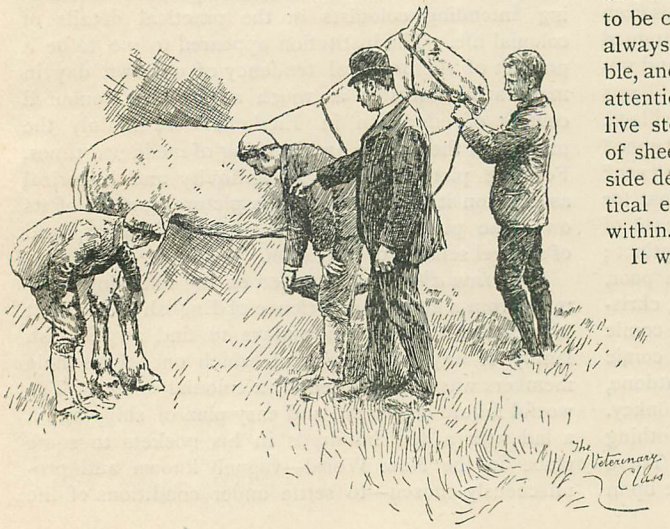
EXPONENTS of the gospel of work, they called themselves, and so indeed they were, though my first introduction to them took place when they were practising the tenets of the companion gospel of relaxation. Attracted by the sound of noisy chaff and laughter, I had peeped into a courtyard, and watched the motley group of mounted youngsters, surrounded by a jeering laughing crowd. To enable them to share in the fun of a day's cub-hunting, the neighbourhood had been scoured for "mounts," which were of all sizes and descriptions; some not unworthy of Tattersall's, others fit only for the knacker's yard. A few of them kept their own horses, and their turn-out was naturally faultless, and they stood out conspicuous from their fellows. For the rest, a sorrier set of fiery, untamed steeds was never seen, though, to be sure, fire and untamability seemed characteristic of their riders. I was able to recognise the steeds afterwards in the village. There was the blacksmith's bay cob, very much "gone" at the knees; the baker's black mare which the "vet." used as a subject for his class demonstrations, for there was supposed to be no known equine disease of which it did not show traces more or less distinct; a white pony hired from the local publican; a poor, worn-out patient beast from the carrier's stable, christened "Rosinante" by his rider; and lastly, the comic man—why should there be in every crowd a comic man, who is the butt of everyone?—not to be outdone, had mounted himself on the local hawker's donkey. What a babel of echoing sounds! Clearly nothing came amiss to these frank, easy-going youths. There was a wild chorus of chaffing sarcasm that made up in good humour all that it lacked in depth. Jeers from those who had only "Shanks's mare" to carry them, and derisive shouts from the cavaliers in return! Then a great bell clanged and the noisy crowd melted away and I was taken to view the educational establishment of which these youths were the *alumni*.

A summer's wandering in search of rest and relaxation through out-of-the-way districts on the eastern seaboard of Britain had landed me in a sleepy village, peopled with that strange amphibious race—half bucolic, half marine—that one finds in rural villages near the sea. The population were in a transitional stage of wakefulness. A wave of immigration from the outer world had ruffled the placid surface of its somnolent existence. A year or two previously an enterprising body of educationalists had established in its vicinity one of those modern agricultural colleges to which some reformers are looking for the remedy of the evils of over-crowded towns, and for expanding the limited sphere of life-work before the youth of to-day. I found this particular centre of education had been established for the special purpose of training intending colonists in the practical details of colonial life. The institution appeared to me to be a product of the practical tendency of our own day in matters of education as much as our time-honoured centres of education in England were mainly the product of the culture and learning of mediæval times. For the picturesqueness of antiquity and historical association it had substituted a picturesqueness of its own—the picturesqueness of natural situation, and of a novel scheme of education.

Its *raison d'être* was founded on the following argument from a general experience of English life. That it was the exception nowadays to find an English family of any dimensions of which one of its male members was not destined for a colonial career. The woeful failure of the old and easy plan of shipping off a lad with a few hundreds in his pockets to some place in the New World—vaguely known and promiscuously chosen—to settle under conditions of life

as different as they could possibly be from those in which he had been brought up, had led to the foundation of an institution which had, as the object of its curriculum, to turn out a practical handy man, practical in action as well as idea ; able to use his eyes and his hands as well as his brains. Thus just as the universities received men from the public schools to fit them for one or other of the learned professions, so this home of the budding colonist would receive them from the same source to fit them for a life abroad. In both cases, so say its promoters, preliminary training is necessary. Preparation for colonial life is as needful to the aspiring emigrant as the preparation for his career at the bar to a budding barrister. The scheme of tuition likewise was adapted to the necessities of the career. Here I found Practice to be the mistress and Theory the handmaid. A thing was first done and the reason why it was done discovered afterwards. The lecture-room and laboratory were supplementary to the field and workshop. The object of the curriculum was not the restricted one of turning out a good farmer, or a competent surveyor, or a specialist in any one capacity, but the wider one of training capable citizens of Greater Britain by encouraging and directing individual energy, courage and endurance. For here education appeared to be regarded only in its primary sense—that is to say, its functions were to *bring out* latent capacity, and direct it on the right lines for fitting a man to hold his own in the practical work-a-day New World, where skill and enterprise are essential to his well-being, and where labour implies no social degradation ; not to *cram in* so much mental pabulum as would qualify him for passing a competitive examination. It intended to be a preparation for men whose mission was to conquer the earth and subdue natural forces to their own requirements, not a feeding-ground for "Strasburg Geese."

It was while paying a visit to this institution and being entertained at luncheon in the dining-hall that I marked all the above down in my mental note-book. The students were seated before me at long tables, and much good-humoured merriment echoed all around.

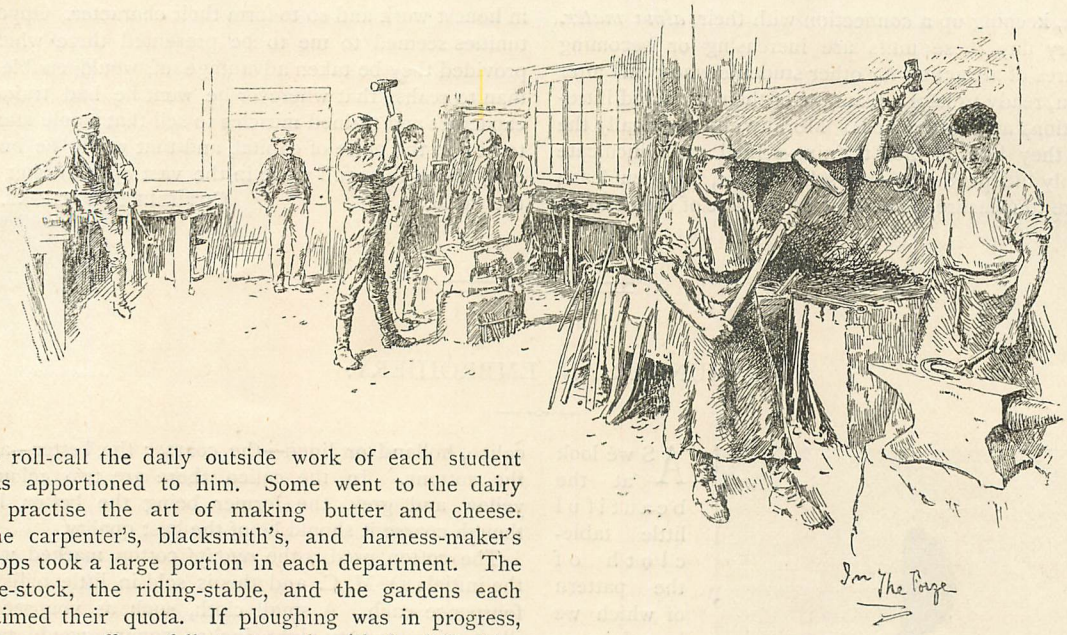


I saw no pale-faced anchorites "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," but rows of ruddy laughing faces belonging to stalwart forms, clad in cords and mud-splashed gaiters, with knotted handkerchiefs round their throats. Not that collars or ball-room manners were strange to them. *Dulce est desipere in loco*, and life in the fields and workshops engenders a mode of behaviour, rough, ready, and free and easy. Round the walls of the dining hall hung the flags of all the colonies and the United States, and beneath each was inscribed the names of those past students who had migrated to that particular portion of the globe.

No detail of the life at the college struck me more forcibly than its imitation of colonial life. The isolation of the buildings and the estate surrounding them was almost unique and in nearly every particular the students were thrown on their own resources for amusement and distraction. Thus identity with the first condition of bush life, save in the number of associates, was complete. Landwards seven miles of wild and picturesque heath-land separated it from the nearest town and the sea bounded its other side. Midway between no two centres of civilisation, on the road to nowhere, it stood like a little colony subsisting by and for itself.

Round an old-fashioned manor-house of the comfortable type as a nucleus the buildings had been grouped by piecemeal additions as increased growth made extension necessary. The lecture- and common-rooms were numerous and well-lighted. Above them were light, airy dormitories, parcelled out into cubicles. The buildings stood in the centre of a large farm of 2,000 acres, under cultivation, and in the natural capacities of the estate nothing seemed wanting that was necessary to enable the objects of the institution to be fully and completely carried out. Opportunities and facilities had not to be created : they were there ready to hand. The land itself was of a mixed character—arable, pasture, heath, and woodland—and the absorbing occupations of a large farm were carried on daily, season after season ; ploughing, sowing, reaping, garnering, each in regular routine. There was also a large dairy in full work. Estate works seemed to be constantly in progress, and the workshops were always full of active workers. Extensive fruit, vegetable, and nursery gardens were there to demand constant attention. Finally, for breeding and market purposes, live stock of every description, including a large flock of sheep, were reared and fattened. In all the outside departments there appeared to be shown a practical exposition of the theories of the lecture-room within.

It was permitted me to follow the course of a day's routine and to mix with the young fellows who were enjoying the spring-time of their lives there. At 8.30 a.m., the work of the day properly commenced when students in residence assembled for roll-call, though an energetic portion had begun work much earlier by giving timely assistance to the cowman in milking the cows, in itself a useful acquirement on a colonial homestead.



At roll-call the daily outside work of each student was apportioned to him. Some went to the dairy to practise the art of making butter and cheese. The carpenter's, blacksmith's, and harness-maker's shops took a large portion in each department. The live-stock, the riding-stable, and the gardens each claimed their quota. If ploughing was in progress, many went off manfully to struggle with the difficulties of straight furrows and even stetches. Finally the Professors of Agriculture, Surveying, and Veterinary Science personally conducted field classes for practical work and demonstration in their own departments of study. The estate and farm seemed extensive enough to allow each of them full scope, for there was always a sick animal to be doctored, an intricate piece of surveying to be attempted, or an experimental form of culture to be examined and commented on. Strolling through the courtyard to visit each principal department in detail, I came first to the range of workshops containing departments for blacksmith, wheelwright and carpenters. Here all the horses were shod, implements repaired, the simpler forms of furniture made and the material necessary for gates, outbuildings, and other estate fixtures prepared. On the estate timber was felled, lumbered, and sawn; and within the shops and adjacent yard were carts in all stages of repair—sheep-troughs, garden-lights, windows, wheelbarrows, and a host of miscellaneous articles of a like description being made by the students working under competent supervision.

The vegetable and nursery gardens were next inspected, wherein one of the most striking features to an old traveller like myself consisted of the numerous plots of ground cultivated by the students themselves. It was rather a reminder of one's childhood to see these miniature gardens, but they represented work of a serious description and many a man who has been abroad knows the importance to a settler of even a rudimentary knowledge of kitchen-gardening.

Then the dairy occupied my attention. This was a large, cool building furnished with all the latest scientific methods of raising cream and making butter. Cream-separators and cream-raisers of different patterns, and churns of various shapes and sizes, were in use, and the results registered. Then the various feeding-grounds, grazing-yards, stables, and barns were seen in turn. Each was well-stocked and demanded a portion of his attention from every student at some period of his educational career.

Indoors the same comprehensive plan subsisted. Lectures were given twice daily and the following subjects were treated theoretically: Geology, Zoology, Mineralogy, Agriculture, Building, Surveying and Levelling, Veterinary practice, Estate accounts, etc. In addition there was a working ambulance class carried on under the St. John Association rules, so that not only the requirements of colonial life but also the accidents attendant upon it might receive due attention.

Where all the work was mainly out of doors and of an attractive nature to a healthy-minded student, to turn from the work of the college to the recreation of the college was to turn from one form of physical exercise to another. There were no overworked brains to be relieved. But the natural spirit of emulation and the inherent elasticity of English youth demanded a change from work that was exercise with a serious object to play that was exercise without one. Accordingly I found in active existence a prosperous athletic club which supported cricket, football, boating, and tennis.

To a jaded Londoner and one who had been satiated with that journalistic craze, that the Anglo-Saxon race is losing its elasticity, the two days I spent with these colonists in embryo were the most bracing of all the days of my well-earned holiday. When I left, the conviction was borne in upon me that though this training-college had no long past, it must rapidly be making its history and forming its traditions. To me it was a bridge between the old world and the new, for I was told there was now scarcely a portion of the globe that had not at least one of its old students located there. Scattered over Australasia, Canada, the States, Cape Colony, Argentina, India, are some sixty or seventy

men, keeping up a connection with their *alma mater.* Every day these units are increasing or becoming centres of attraction for other students who come after them, ready to take advantage of their proffered introductions and experiences. Morally and physically the life they lead at their training-school must inculcate manly independence and self-reliance, for men learn there to measure themselves by the side of their fellows in honest work and so to form their character. Opportunities seemed to me to be presented there which, provided they be taken advantage of, would enable a man to realise that wherever he went he had trained capacities and trained muscles to sell that would stand to him in the place of capital, and that would be honestly worth their full value in the vast open market of the world.

CUTHBERT WITHERS.

HUNGARIAN EMBROIDERY.

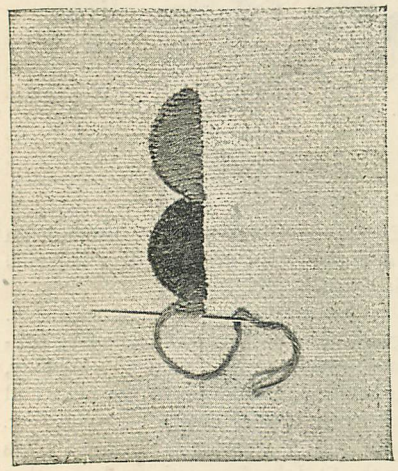


FIG. 1.—THE BUTTONHOLE STITCH.

AS we look at the beautiful little table-cloth of the pattern of which we have here an illustration, if we are at a short distance from it we think we are looking at a magnificent piece of brocade; the heavy pattern, done in yellow, blue, and red, shows so well against the clay-coloured background and the boldness of the design strikes us as particularly effective.

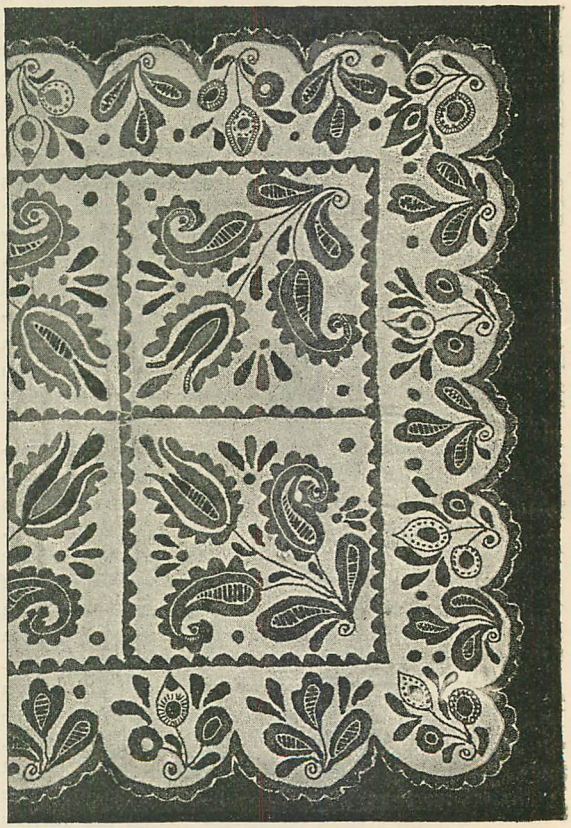
If we go nearer and take the work into our hands, we see, to our surprise, that the material upon which this beautiful work is executed is nothing whatever but unbleached calico, and that the embroiderer had used for this excellent effect in carrying out her design, nothing but coloured cottons.

If we wish to trace this novel embroidery to its original source, we must go east and south of the Danube, and there, among the uncultured peasants, we shall find most exquisite taste and a luxurious wealth of fancy exercised in their needlework. The colouring is so good, the patterns they use so true to artistic laws that it is surprising that the work has not been imitated more by those who have seen it than heretofore. In England it is one of the newest embroideries, and we feel sure our readers will be glad to try their skill upon it.

Bedspreads, table-covers, side-board cloths, aprons, cushions, etc. etc., all can be worked in this manner, and the great charm of it is that it is most inexpensive. Bulgarian work is costly, as that is done on velvet, and silk and gold are used. But for the true Hungarian work nothing is needed but the unbleached calico, holland or linen—the coarser the better—and the cottons. In the calico there are two colours, yellow and grey, the former being the better, but though coarse it should be of the best quality.

The cotton used is the *reprisé* cotton marked with the initials D. M. C. and this is sold in little balls at fourpence each. A small cloth, such as you see in illustration, twenty-eight inches square, would take about six balls to do.

The cotton is in strands, like filoselle silk, several threads being wound together. In working you cut off the length required and work as evenly as possible with it, remembering that it is necessary to keep the



DESIGN FOR TABLE-CLOTH.

outline true, and that neatness is a *sine quâ non*. Easy as the stitches are the whole work is spoilt if they are carelessly done, and patience is required by the tyro in the work until excellence is attained.

Before speaking of the stitches themselves employed in the work we will think of the pattern. The stitches can easily be learnt from the samples here given, and with a piece begun no fear of failure need be anticipated by anyone who does embroidery fairly well.

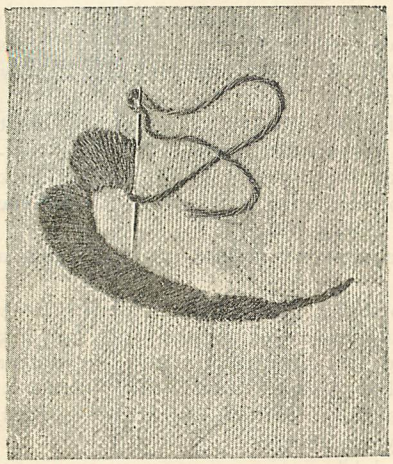


FIG. 2.—SATIN STITCH.

There is very little variation in the designs. They are usually bold and large, small patterns not lending themselves so effectively to this kind of work. In the work still done in Hungary you will see simply variations of much the same leading idea, and the same three colours are always used—red, blue, and yellow.

You can take off your pattern with carbonised paper, or else, after pricking it, pounce it and then draw it with a pencil or oil paint. The methods of putting on patterns are many, and most people know how to do them in one way or another.

The cotton falls softly and evenly and the stitches employed are French knots, satin stitch, buttonhole stitch and stem stitch; the small bars across, seen in many parts of the pattern are done with one long stitch.

You will please note that in the cloth before you the scalloped edge is done in buttonhole stitch, not in satin stitch.

In Fig. 1 you will see that the buttonhole stitch is simple enough, one exception being made, however, to the usual method of working, inasmuch as it is not padded.

In Fig. 2 you see a drawing of satin stitch and will note that here again is no padding. The stitches, it will be observed, do not go straight over the leaves but obliquely, and each stitch lies close to the other. Where satin or buttonhole stitch is used it is a serious fault to let the stitch part so that any trace of the foundation is seen.

In Fig. 3 you see how the long loose stitches form bars across the leaf which is outlined in stem stitch.

If you use a fringe with this work you can make one of the material itself.

This work, it will be seen, is very charming, and it has a further recommendation that it cleans easily.

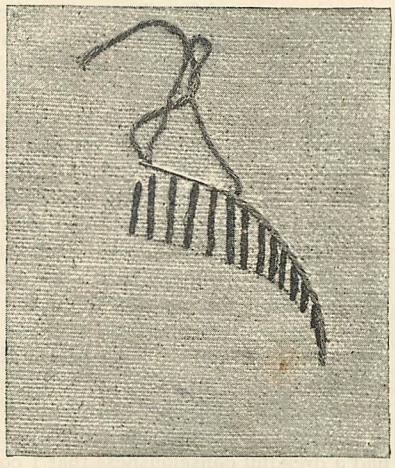


FIG. 3.—LOOSE STITCHES FOR LEAVES.

The pattern here given for a cloth would adapt itself extremely well to a bedspread and be very handsome indeed when used in that way.

*** The illustrations to this article are from original designs specially prepared by Mdlle. Nörregaid, 12, Queen's Road, Bayswater, W.

THE ROCK OF KAZIM.

A STORY IN ONE CHAPTER.

THIS is the true story of the rock of Kazim. I am not referring to the story of how we got it from the French, though that is a good story in its way.

This is that other story of the rock of Kazim, which has been told so often by one Anglo-Indian to another, that it has ended by assuming mythical proportions. As I was the chief, I might almost say the sole, actor in the original episode, I propose to give here a short unvarnished account of what really happened, and as I am not a literary person, and don't find writing an easy task, I shall have to begin at the beginning.

My cousin, Jack Dallow, and I have been firm friends since the first day my mother took me to Dallow Court.

Jack was an only son; his father was dead, and Jack was the head of the Dallow family. He lived at Dallow Court with his mother, my Aunt Lavinia, and an unmarried Miss Dallow, our Aunt Emily.

My father, Colonel Dallow, was a younger brother of Jack's father. He was a half-pay officer, with little money and a superabundant number of children. I was the youngest of six boys, who followed closely on one another's heels, then came my two sisters, and lastly a little adopted daughter, an orphan niece of my mother's.

I was six years old, when I paid this eventful visit, and had been specially invited by Aunt Lavinia.

Jack's health was delicate, she wrote to my mother, and the doctor had advised her to get him some young companion.

She chose me in preference to my elder brothers, because, being two years younger than Jack, I should not be big enough to hurt him.

Aunt Lavinia lived in constant terror of Jack's getting hurt, and she had an exaggerated notion of the roughness of my elder brothers.

My mother gave me many directions and cautions with respect to my behaviour at Dallow, and my father promised me a thrashing when I came home if I gave her cause of complaint.

We reached Dallow in the afternoon, just as tea was going on, and found several ladies assembled in the great drawing-room. Jack was among them, talking glibly to a French lady, who happened to be among the company.

Presently he was called to play upon the violin, and his performance was really remarkable for a boy of his age. Then Aunt Lavinia would have him recite poetry to one of the ladies, and Aunt Emily showed his drawings to another of them ; the rest of the entertainment was supplied by Aunt Lavinia's repeating all the wonderful things Jack had said, while Aunt Emily related the equally wonderful things he had done.

At last there came a little lull in the conversation, and Aunt Emily turned to me with the question :

" Well, Jem, and what can you do ? "

The eyes of the room were all fixed upon me, and I had a dreadful consciousness that I could not do one of these fine things in which Jack was so clever.

I got red in the face, and said nothing.

" Jem ! " said my mother in a warning tone.

I knew I was not behaving nicely ; I must find some answer to Aunt Emily's question. My eyes turned towards the gifted Jack, and I had a sudden inspiration.

" I think I could knock Jack down," I said.

There was a momentary silence, then the ladies gave a little gasp of dismay, and the torrent burst over my devoted head.

" Oh, Mildred ! " entreated Aunt Lavinia, turning to my mother with tears in her eyes, " you won't let him hurt my poor boy ! "

" I think he had better be sent home again at once," said Aunt Emily ; while my mother added in her severest tone :

" I shall tell your father of you, Jem."

I stood in the middle of them, choking with shame and anger, resolutely keeping back the tears which my brothers had taught me to despise, but quite unable to explain that though I had said I *could* knock Jack down, I had not had the least intention of doing so.

It was Jack himself who put an end to the situation. He walked across the great room to the place where I was standing.

" I am not afraid of you," he said. " Come and see my rabbits ; " and putting his little hand into mine, he led me out of the room, without giving anyone time to interfere, and carried me off to the out-house, where the rabbits were kept.

That was the first scrape Jack got me out of, but it was by no means the last. No one ever had a better friend than I've had in Jack, though what he saw to like in me I never could understand. Perhaps it was part of his cleverness to see something that nobody else could find out.

I had a delightful visit at Dallow Court. I don't know whether the doctor's recipe of " young companionship " had anything to do with it, but Jack certainly got to look rosier and stronger during the month I was at Dallow.

Aunt Lavinia was very pleased, and said I was a good boy.

I was glad to hear it, though I was at a loss to know what I had done to earn such unusual praise, but Jack promptly seized the opportunity to ask his mother whether I could not always stop at Dallow Court.

Aunt Lavinia looked startled, my mother laughed, and Aunt Emily exclaimed :

" My dear Jack ! "

Then there followed an animated discussion between the three ladies, while Jack stood serenely silent, knowing it would end in his getting his own way—the usual end of a discussion at Dallow Court.

Except for occasional visits to my own home, when Jack always insisted upon accompanying me—to Aunt Lavinia's great alarm—I spent my early years at Dallow Court.

I cannot say I shared Jack's studies—he was far ahead of me in learning—but I had the advantage of being taught by his clever French governess, Mademoiselle Lamotte, besides having lessons from Mr. Acton, the curate of Dallow St. Mary's, who taught Jack Greek and Latin.

Mademoiselle Lamotte lived at the Court, and, with the exception of Jack, she was the cleverest person in the house. The two were very fond of each other, and Mademoiselle considered that Jack was worthy to be a Frenchman.

I felt disgusted at the compliment to my cousin, and only half satisfied at hearing I should never deserve it myself. I was " un vrai Anglais, un petit John Bull," said Mademoiselle ; but she gave herself endless trouble to teach me to read—an art I had not yet arrived at—and taught me to write in her flourishing little French handwriting, which laid up trouble for me in the future.

Jack had acquired the same handwriting, and we both got into rows about it when we went to school, but we never managed to alter it—a proof, Mademoiselle would have said, of the thoroughness of her teaching.

It was entirely due to the excellent education I received at Dallow Court that I got creditably through my school career, and was able to pass into Sandhurst.

Then, for the first time, Jack and I were separated. Jack went to Oxford, while I got my commission, and

as my father could not make me an allowance, I went out to India, where I was appointed to the —th Native Infantry, then stationed at Feranpore, in the Bombay Presidency.

I was happy enough in my new life, and made plenty of friends, but found no one who could take Jack's place.

He promised to come out and see me, but it was five years before he could redeem his promise.

Then one happy day he wrote to tell me he was coming—could I go down to Bombay and meet him?

I applied for leave; in my eagerness, I got it at least three weeks before Jack could possibly arrive.

However, I had three months due to me, and as Feranpore was a dull little place, I determined to go at once to Bombay.

I had an invitation to stay with my friends the Bodenhams, who had a pleasant house on Malabar Hill, and there they received me with true Anglo-Indian hospitality.

"I am only sorry, Mr. Dallow," said my hostess after my arrival, "that I must give you rather a small room; we have given our spare room up to Mrs. Corfield."

"But half the young fellows in Bombay would envy you for sleeping in a cupboard, if it were under the same roof as Mrs. Corfield," remarked Bodenham.

I gathered from this, that there must be something exceptional about Mrs. Corfield, and when I saw her I was not disappointed.

She was a very beautiful woman, tall and graceful, with a gentle melancholy sort of manner, easily accounted for by the fact that she was a widow of barely a year's standing.

I could not quite make out why she was stopping on in Bombay; but she told me she was alone in the world, and one place was now much the same to her as another.

That first evening she talked a great deal to me about myself, and a great deal about herself. I learned that Mr. Corfield had been an army surgeon, and had married her from the schoolroom—"I might almost say from the nursery," she added, with a laugh; "I was so ridiculously young for a bride."

"Do you know anything of Dallow Court?" she asked, after a while.

"Dallow Court!" I repeated, "why, it's my home! But what do you know about Dallow Court? I don't recollect any one of your name in the neighbourhood."

"Oh! I only heard about it when I was staying with friends," she answered, a little vaguely; and then I remembered her name would not have been always Corfield, but I did not yet feel intimate enough to ask what it had been.

"You are in luck, Dallow," said Bodenham, after Mrs. Corfield had retired; "it's not often that our guest makes so much of a subaltern."

As for me, I was fairly dazzled by Mrs. Corfield's beauty, the charm of her conversation, and the kindness with which she treated me. My vanity was also gratified by the evident favour which she showed to me above all the other young men, who crowded around her.

Even Jack's image faded for a time before this fresh object of devotion. I wished every week could be like the last week, spent in the entrancing presence of Mrs. Corfield; so long as I could be with her, I could look forward to waiting any length of time without undue impatience.

At the end of the first week, while still master of myself to make the effort, I left the Bodenhams' hospitable roof, and took up my quarters at the hotel.

I am afraid my departure was not quite the relief I had meant it to be, as I kept on haunting the Bodenhams' house, spending every minute I could in Mrs. Corfield's society, and employing the rest of my time in writing her some remarkably foolish little notes, which culminated the day before Jack's arrival in a formal offering of my hand and heart.

I thought it was a very touching letter, calculated to move a heart of stone, and I was a little downhearted at the way Mrs. Corfield received it.

"You foolish boy, to fancy an old woman like me!" she exclaimed. "It's hardly possible to believe you are six-and-twenty."

"But I'm only twenty-four. I never said I was twenty-six."

"Didn't you? Then it was someone else."

Then I got very anxious about the someone else; and at the end of our interview I left Mrs. Corfield, certain that she had not rejected me, yet not able to feel sure she had accepted me.

I had to go down now and meet the boat, and the pleasure of seeing Jack again drove Mrs. Corfield from my mind for at least ten minutes.

Then I began on the engrossing theme, and could talk of little else till we separated to dress for dinner; we were to spend the evening with the Bodenhams.

Jack listened to my outpouring with the attention which he habitually bestowed upon his companion. He even asked me an occasional question about Mrs. Corfield, but when I wanted him to express a favourable opinion of her merits, he suggested that it would be better for him to wait till he had seen her.

I was pacified by the reflection that he would not have long to wait, and we went together to the Bodenhams.

They greeted us with their usual friendliness, and as he was introducing Jack to Mrs. Corfield, Bodenham made some joke about my taking a second place now that Mr. Dallow of Dallow Court had appeared upon the scene.

I thought the joke deficient in good taste, and was sure, from the surprised look in Mrs. Corfield's face, that she thought so too.

"How can there be two Mr. Dallows?" she asked. "Mrs. Dallow had only one son."

I hastened to explain; Mrs. Corfield was as gracious as ever.

"Your cousin has told me so much about you," she said, turning to Jack, "I have been quite longing to see you. I hope we shall soon learn to know each other."

"I hope we shall," replied Jack.

The idea that she wished to know Jack for my sake supported me through what might have proved a dull evening; as Mrs. Corfield was so taken up in learning to know Jack, she had hardly a word to bestow on me.

But I consoled myself by thinking what an impression she must be making upon Jack, and was bitterly disappointed after we left the Bodenhams' to find that he again declined to express any opinion, except that Mrs. Corfield was handsome and agreeable.

"Leave me till to-morrow, and I will tell you what I think," he replied, in answer to my importunity; and then I saw he looked pale and worried.

I reproached myself with having been inconsiderate in worrying him, when he was tired with the unusual heat; but he said he was all right, and bade me good-night.

He did not seem to get much sleep that night. I heard him walk up and down his room, which was next to mine, and at last called out to know if he were ill.

He answered that he was quite well, and told me to go to sleep.

We did not meet till late the next morning, when I was wondering whether it would be too early to call on Mrs. Corfield, and whether Jack would think I was treating him badly if I did.

I had not been five minutes in his company before my talk had drifted round to the subject which filled my mind.

"Did you ever see such a charming woman?"

"Is Mrs. Corfield's Christian name Eugenia?" was Jack's strange reply.

"Yes; however did you know it?"

"Poor old Jem! I was afraid of it all along."

"Do talk sense!" I exclaimed, impatiently.

"We've never quarrelled yet, Jem, and we won't begin now, though I'm afraid you won't like what I'm going to tell you."

"If it's anything against Mrs. Corfield——" I began.

"You shall be the judge of that. I'll only tell you what I know. You remember Frank Corfield, Doctor Perry's nephew?"

"I remember Doctor Perry, but I don't recollect any nephew," I replied.

Dr. Perry was the doctor in the little town of Great Dallow, and Aunt Lavinia used to send for him, on an average, once a fortnight, to doctor some real or imaginary ailment of Jack's.

"It was that summer I had bronchitis," continued Jack, "and you spent the holidays at your father's without me. Frank Corfield was staying with his uncle; he was a lad of nineteen, a clever, kind-hearted boy, and Doctor Perry had great hopes of what he would do in his profession.

"I shall never forget the poor gentleman's distress when he told my mother that Frank had gone off, and got married in London to Eugenia Jones, the daughter of old Jones, who kept the 'King's Arms' at Great Dallow.

"She was a very handsome girl, and old Jones, who was well-to-do, had sent her to boarding school and made a lady of her, as he phrased it.

"But she was frivolous and extravagant; she was at least five years older than Frank, and he soon repented most bitterly of his imprudence.

Doctor Perry was very kind to him, and by his advice and help, Frank passed the examination for the Indian medical service, and came out here. Last year, Doctor Perry told us of his death."

"And is that all you've got to say against Mrs. Corfield?" I exclaimed.

"I don't want to say anything against her, but I thought I ought to tell you where she came from."

"If you think I'm going to be influenced by the gossip and prejudices of a little country place——" I began, when Jack interrupted me.

"Never mind that. What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to marry her."

"Have you proposed to her?"

"Yes."

"And has she accepted you?"

"She hasn't refused me."

"Why does she hesitate?"

"Well," I explained, getting confidential now that Jack was showing a proper interest in the subject, "I believe it's my age that's against me. I suppose it's because she wasn't happy with her first husband, who was younger than herself, but she didn't like my being only twenty-four. It seems she had thought I was twenty-six, but I don't see that two years can make all that difference. Do you?"

"It is the difference between your age and mine," replied Jack, gravely: "the difference between the owner of Dallow Court and a lieutenant in a native infantry regiment. It's a hateful thing to say, Jem, but it looks as if she had been mistaking you for me all this time. Didn't you notice how taken aback she was last night at discovering there were two Mr. Dallows, and that I was the owner of Dallow Court?"

"And how civil she was to you, in consequence, you would say? Go on, pray! You think that being my cousin had nothing to do with her kindness to you: that's how men misjudge a woman! Why don't you say at once she was setting her cap at you last night? But I am quite sure of Eugenia's unworldliness. Look, Jack! here's a fair offer: you shall make love to her yourself, if you like, and then you'll see how much she cares for the owner of Dallow Court?"

"You've an odd idea of fairness—towards Mrs. Corfield."

"But if you think her such a bad woman——"

"It's no reason why I should treat her badly. Besides," added Jack, slowly, "there's somebody else who would have a right to object to the plan."

"Oh, Jack! who is it?"

"Ellie."

I almost hugged Jack in my delight. Ellie was my little adopted sister and the pet of our whole household. It was also agreeable, in spite of brave words, to feel I need not fear a rival in "the owner of Dallow Court."

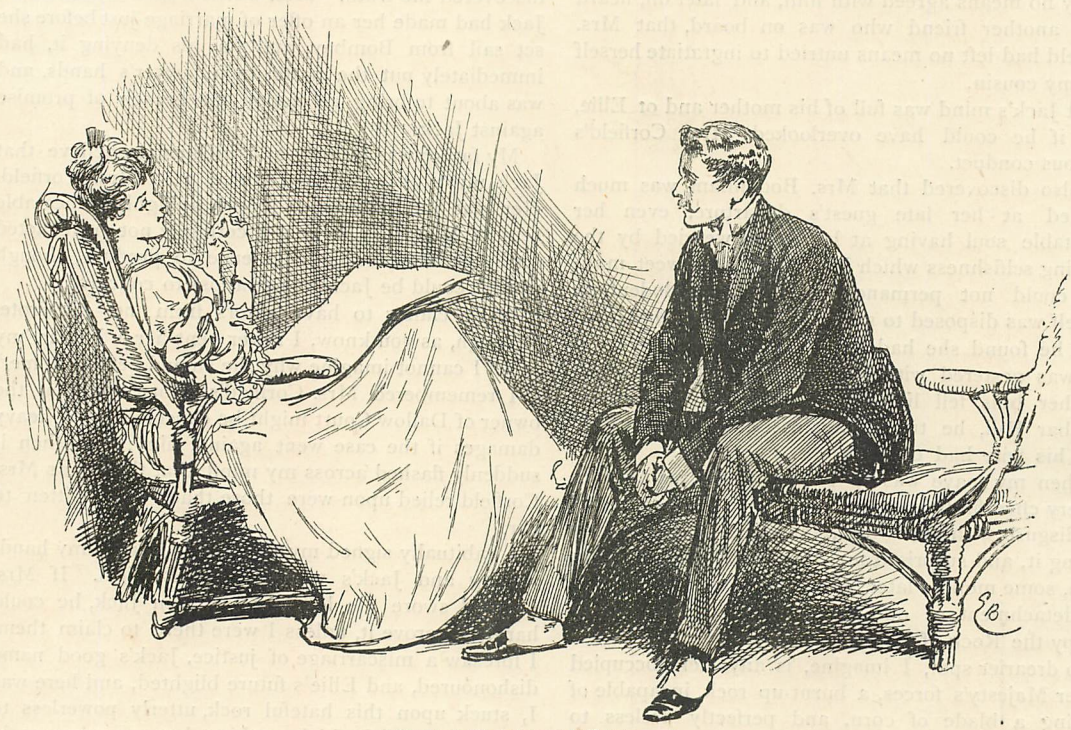
I magnanimously forgave Jack upon the spot, and arranged for him to go out riding with the Bodenhams that evening.

Of course Mrs. Corfield was of the party, and she insisted upon riding with Jack.

"For your sake, you know, dear boy," she said to me, in an affectionate aside.

That was how it went on all the next week. Mrs. Corfield bestowed most of her attention upon Jack, but no day passed without her favouring me with some little confidential aside, a meaning glance, or an affectionate speech.

At the end of the week I was much disconcerted by Jack's announcing that he had seen enough of Bombay, and that he meant to push on at once to Kashmir.



"'YOU FOOLISH BOY!'" (*p.* 271).

He added that I had better come with him.

A month before I should have liked nothing better, now I hesitated how to frame my refusal.

"Well," said Jack, "what's in the way? Is it Mrs. Corfield?"

"I had rather not leave just yet."

"Are you engaged to her?"

"I told you I wasn't," I replied, with some irritation.

"That was a week ago. If I were you, Jem, I'd have it out with her. If she refuses you, you can forget her in Kashmir—the game there would make you forget anything. If she accepts you, I've no right to interfere, and I won't be so unreasonable as to suggest a separation."

There was sense in Jack's proposals; besides, I longed to be out of my suspense, and Mrs. Corfield had given me reason to be pretty sure of her feelings towards me.

I was also encouraged by the evident concern with which she heard of our proposed expedition to Kashmir; and great was my surprise, when I pressed her for an answer, to be told she could never marry a man she did not esteem, and that it would be better for us to see no more of each other. She should advise me to go with my cousin to Kashmir.

I could not imagine how I had forfeited her regard, till she informed me that she could never forgive the duplicity which had led me to represent myself as the owner of Dallow Court.

In vain I protested my innocence of this monstrous charge; Mrs. Corfield only entreated me not to add to my former deceit. She declared there was no possibility of a misunderstanding, as I had myself informed her of the fact; and when I tried to explain about my calling Dallow Court my home, and begged her to appeal to Mr. and Mrs. Bodenham, who had heard what I said, she drew herself up with an air of offended pride, asked me whether I meant to insult her by discussing her affairs with strangers, and finally walked out of the room; she left me feeling more foolish than ever I had felt before.

I went back to Jack.

"I'm ready to go with you to Kashmir to-morrow."

"Oh, Jem, I'm so sorry; but look here!" and Jack handed me a telegram he had just received.

It was sent by Ellie, to tell him that Aunt Lavinia was dangerously ill; would he come home at once?

For the moment my own troubles were forgotten as I hurried off to take Jack's passage home.

The steamer sailed for Brindisi in two days, and

when we went to say good-bye to the Bodenhams we did not see Mrs. Corfield.

Only on the following evening, as I stood on the deck of the P. & O. steamer which was to take Jack to England, I suddenly heard Mrs. Corfield's voice at my elbow.

"Good-evening, Mr. Dallow. You did not expect to see me off as well as your cousin, did you?"

She gave a strange sort of laugh, and went below before I had collected my wits.

"What a bore to have that woman on board! But I don't suppose she will want to claim my acquaintance," said Jack.

I by no means agreed with him, and later on, heard from another friend who was on board, that Mrs. Corfield had left no means untried to ingratiate herself with my cousin.

But Jack's mind was full of his mother and of Ellie, even if he could have overlooked Mrs. Corfield's previous conduct.

I also discovered that Mrs. Bodenham was much relieved at her late guest's departure, even her hospitable soul having at last been wearied by the exacting selfishness which Mrs. Corfield's sweet manners could not permanently disguise. Bodenham himself was disposed to stand up for her at first; but when he found she had left Bombay deeply in debt, and was pestered with applications for her address, and her bills fell like a shower on the house on Malabar Hill, he turned against her more bitterly than his wife had done.

When my leave was up I rejoined my regiment in no very cheerful frame of mind: indeed, so great was my disgust with the world, that I felt no regret at leaving it, and surprised my comrades by my stoicism when, some months later, I was appointed to command the detachment of our regiment which was sent to occupy the Rock of Kazim.

No drearier spot, I imagine, is anywhere occupied by her Majesty's forces, a burnt-up rock, incapable of growing a blade of corn, and perfectly useless to anyone. We only occupy it to prevent another nation from taking it, not from any dog-in-the-manger feeling, but because the rock commands our road to India. There is no population on this tiny island, and I found myself the only European in the place. Happily for me, my second in command, a native officer of the name of Ram Singh, was an intelligent man, and he and I were very good friends. My time was pretty well occupied in caring for the little force under my command, and there were my home letters to prevent me from feeling quite out of the world.

No ships touch at Kazim, but we used to signal to the steamers as they passed to and fro, and send out a boat to meet them when they had anything for us.

It happened, however, that for some weeks after my arrival at Kazim my letters remained unforwarded, and several mails passed without my getting any home news.

At the end of that time an accumulation was sent on to me, with a polite letter of apology for the mistake which had been made.

I got the letters in the morning, and at once sat down to read them. I had already heard that Aunt Lavinia was better, and was puzzled to find a reference in my mother's letter—the first one I opened—to "Jack's trouble."

I next turned to an incoherent little note from Ellie. "Wasn't it dreadful?" she asked. "She should never be happy again; and papa was so angry, and she didn't know what to do."

I was getting impatient, when I saw Jack's well-known hand, and knew I should find out what was the matter at last.

My impatience changed to consternation when I discovered the truth. Mrs. Corfield had declared that Jack had made her an offer of marriage just before she set sail from Bombay, and on his denying it, had immediately put the matter in a lawyer's hands, and was about to bring an action for breach of promise against Jack.

My father was furious, and inclined to believe that Jack must at least have trifled with Mrs. Corfield. Her case had been taken up by a highly respectable firm of lawyers, who would certainly not have acted for her unless she had evidence to produce, though what it could be Jack was at a loss to conceive.

"She claims to have letters from me," he wrote, "though, as you know, I never sent her a line in my life. I cannot imagine why she should persecute me."

I remembered Mrs. Corfield's debts, and that the owner of Dallow Court might be expected to pay heavy damages if the case went against him; and then it suddenly flashed across my mind that the letters Mrs. Corfield relied upon were those that I had written to her.

I habitually signed myself J. Dallow, and my handwriting and Jack's were almost identical. If Mrs. Corfield swore the letters were from Jack, he could hardly disprove it, unless I were there to claim them. I foresaw a miscarriage of justice, Jack's good name dishonoured, and Ellie's future blighted, and here was I, stuck upon this hateful rock, utterly powerless to stop the mischief, which nothing but my presence in England could avert.

There was no time to apply for leave. Mrs. Corfield's case would be heard in less than a month's time; I should barely reach home soon enough to be of use, if I took the very next steamer which passed the rock.

This idea gave a fresh turn to my thoughts; this was the day on which the P. & O. steamer generally passed us, homeward bound.

I stepped out of my hut, which was only a few paces from the water's edge. Ram Singh was standing on the shore, a telescope to his eye.

"The smoke of the P. & O. steamer is just visible," he said.

I did not speak for a minute.

Before me I saw two duties: my duty to my friend and my duty to my country.

One said to me "Go;" the other said "Stay." I knew that in absenting myself without leave, I was laying myself open to the charge of desertion, and all that it implied of ruin and disgrace.

If I remained at my post nobody would blame me, and Jack would be the last person to find fault with me.

But my friend was in danger, and my country was not. It was a time of profound peace, Ram Singh was faithful and competent, and there was Jack at home, who wanted me.

My mind was made up, and there was no time to lose. I turned to Ram Singh.

"Signal to the steamer," I said, "and tell the men to get the boat ready at once. I have to go to England immediately, but I shall be back within the month, and I know that our flag is safe in your hands."

My journey home was not a pleasant one, for I was tormented with many fears.

Should I get home in time to be of use? Would the evidence I had to offer be as valuable as I had imagined?

Perhaps Jack could have got on very well without me, and there was no justification for my rash act.

But all my doubts vanished after my first meeting with Jack.

"I could never have sanctioned your running such a risk for me. I am not worth it, Jem!" he exclaimed, when he found out what I had done.

We met in London, where Jack happened to be staying for a time. I got his address from his lawyers, Messrs. Clarke & Adams, whom I visited immediately on my arrival.

By Jack's wish, Mr. Clarke saw her lawyers, and arranged for an interview between them and myself.

As I had guessed, the letters Mrs. Corfield relied upon were those, I had written to her in Bombay; and I succeeded in convincing her lawyers of the fact.

Not only was there the similarity in the handwriting, but, though the letters were undated, I was able to prove that one of them at least had been written before Jack had set foot in the country, as it contained a reference to a certain charity bazaar, where Mrs. Corfield and I had met one another a week before Jack's arrival in Bombay. When I had pointed this out to the lawyers, and we had verified it by a reference to the old numbers of the Indian papers, there was nothing more to be urged for their client, and they were anxious to withdraw from a case which could bring them neither profit nor reputation.

Mrs. Corfield was alarmed at finding herself discovered, and at hearing I was in London instead of on the rock of Kazim.

She consented to publish an apology to Jack, and also signed a statement, acknowledging that the letters she had attributed to Jack had been written by me.

This was sent to my father, who thereupon graciously forgave Jack for the misdeed he had not committed.

I did not venture to go home myself, as I could neither bring myself to keep the truth from my father, nor to face him so long as my breach of discipline was unpardoned.

Three days I spent with Jack in London, and then, my business being completed, I started off to Brindisi, and regained my rock in less than a month from the time I had left it.

Everything had gone smoothly in my absence, and Ram Singh expressed a hope that my journey had been profitable to me.

"Yes," I replied; "I have helped my friend, and overcome my enemy."

There was a gleam of sympathy in Ram Singh's dark eyes; he came of a race where the maintenance of the blood feud is the most sacred of duties.

"You may count upon my silence," he said.

I knew he spoke the truth, but now I had done what I could for Jack, there was that other duty to think about.

"Thank you, Ram Singh," I said. "I would trust you as a brother, but I am going to-night to write a full report of my journey to Colonel Hanbury."

The next steamer which passed the rock carried my letter to my colonel, and I spent an uncomfortable time while expecting his reply.

Week after week passed, and when at last there came a letter in Colonel Hanbury's well-known hand, it was addressed to Ram Singh. My heart sank when I saw it, as I guessed I was to be superseded.

It was hard to gather anything from Ram Singh's impassive face, but when he had read it he put the letter in my hand.

It was a friendly note from Colonel Hanbury, expressing his satisfaction at hearing of the efficient manner in which Ram Singh had discharged his duties at Kazim during Mr. Dallow's recent visit to England.

There was not a word for me either then or later on, when my detachment was recalled in due time, and we rejoined our regiment.

Once I tried to approach the subject with Colonel Hanbury, but he promptly silenced me.

"King Solomon tells us, there is a time to speak and a time to be silent. You spoke at the right time. Don't spoil it by talking at the wrong."

I was silent for many years. Colonel Hanbury had long since retired, and was a white-haired old gentleman, living at Bath, and I was a colonel myself, with scars and medals, when I went down to see him.

"That was a close shave for you that time at Kazim," he said, as we were talking over old days.

"I have never understood why my conduct was overlooked," I replied.

"I mentioned it to the chief, and we talked it over, he, and Cardale, and I. We agreed there could be no middle course. If your conduct were noticed, you would have to be dismissed the service, *pour encourager les autres*, as Voltaire said. Cardale thought you would have to go, but the chief said—

"'We can't afford to lose a lad who is too loyal either to desert his friend or deceive his superiors. Our Indian Empire is the work of men who were not afraid of responsibility, and I don't mean to lose sight of a young fellow who, in a sudden emergency, chose the generous, self-risking course, instead of intrenching himself behind rules and regulations. Let our young friend hold his tongue, and we will keep our own counsel.'"

"I am sure you put in a good word for me," I said to the old man, who had always been kind to me.

"'THE SMOKE OF THE P. & O. STEAMER IS JUST VISIBLE'" (*p.* 274).

"I did what I could. I told them you were the most promising young fellow in the regiment, and so popular with the men that, if you had chosen, Ram Singh and the rest of them would never have said a word. I pointed out that if you were dismissed it would be in consequence of your own frankness, and that it would be hard for you to suffer where a less honourable man would have escaped. All the same, you didn't deserve to escape scot free as you did."

"Scot free!" I exclaimed. "I don't think you quite realise what I went through. I was tortured with doubt as to whether I had not done a disgraceful act; I didn't dare to face my father, or even venture home for one look at my mother; and when I had got back to Kazim, and you sent that letter to Ram Singh instead of to me, I made quite sure I was to be dismissed the service."

"Ah! I thought I should give you a fright that time," chuckled the old colonel; "but you know it served you right."

"Yes," I replied: "that's what I've often said to myself. Every time I have suffered from my youthful rashness, I have felt the truth of the old saying, 'As you make your bed, so must you lie on it.'"

"Has yours been such a hard one?"

"Not harder than I deserved," I replied, laughing. "But it's not pleasant to be the hero of an absurd story, which yet you are unable to contradict. I don't know how anything leaked out, but the usual story told about me is that, in my early days, I habitually applied to be appointed to the rock, whence it was my custom to signal the steamers and make off to London, leaving the rock under the command of Ram Singh. People even say that on one occasion I ran up against you in Bond Street. It's a fine instance of how a legend may arise, but I can tell you it does one no good to be the hero of such a legend."

"You certainly haven't been lucky in the manner of promotion, considering the service you've seen," said Colonel Hanbury, thoughtfully.

"My reputation has been against me. I've been looked upon as a feather-brained fellow, good enough to send where hard knocks are going; but when the rough work has been done, and good places are to be filled up, they stick in some steady-going fellow, who can be trusted to keep things quiet, and do nothing to furnish paragraphs for the newspapers."

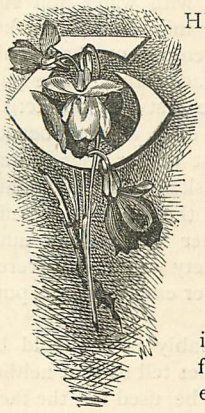
"Well," said the colonel, philosophically, "it's no good grieving over spilt milk; and you are not the only man who would act differently if he had his time to come over again."

Should I act differently? I don't know. Yesterday I was with Jack and Ellie. They are so happy, their lives are so useful and beautiful, that I cannot grudge what has been taken out of my life to perfect theirs. All that remains for me is to submit to the buffets of ill-fortune with such good grace as I may, and earnestly warn other young men from tampering with duty—even in the cause of friendship.

E. CHAPMAN.

HOW TO LOOK NICE.

BY PHYLLIS BROWNE. IN TWO PARTS. PART II.



THE style of dress we adopt has a great deal to do with our looking nice. When we wear what becomes us we look quite unlike the same selves wearing what is not becoming. This is why slavish obedience to fashion is so frequently a mistake, and it has been said that "many a famous beauty owes her reputation to the chance becomingness of the prevailing mode." Every fashion that comes in suits certain forms and certain faces; as a matter of course it equally does not suit other forms and other faces; why then should all adopt it? Yet let it not be taken for granted that common-sense teaches us to defy fashion. Reasonably followed fashion is a very good thing, it promotes change, and change encourages trade; it suggests new ideas, and prevents monotony. It is very well so long as it rests on a principle, and the principle is that each woman should understand her own style, and let the dicta of fashion be subservient thereto.

To understand her own style a woman must realise exactly what she is, whether she is stout or thin, short or tall, dark or fair, of a sallow or a clear complexion. Then she must dress accordingly. If she is stout she should try by her dress to suggest height rather than breadth; she should avoid tight skirts, should favour soft materials and dark colours. If too thin she should try by her dress to suggest breadth rather than length, and should try to increase her apparent bulk. Long perpendicular lines give height to the figure, horizontal lines going round the figure make it look shorter. Short jackets therefore are to be avoided by stout women, as also should ruffles at the shoulders and hips. So too with colour. Having discovered what colour is becoming to her, harmonises with the colour of her hair, her eyes, and her complexion, let the woman who wishes to look nice be faithful to that colour, and return to it again and again, and her fidelity will be rewarded.

The mode of dressing the hair has a great deal to do with beauty, yet fashion is as arbitrary in deciding how the hair should be worn as it is in deciding how dresses should be made. Mr. G. F. Watts, the great English artist, gave some hints on this subject some years ago, which are of great value. Writing in a contemporary, Mr. Watts said—

"Hair is beautiful, and Greek poetry is full of allusion to it, but it never will be found that the size of the head of a Greek statue is much enlarged by it; the relative proportion was felt to be important before all. Fashions that create or increase a disproportionate size of head cannot be in good taste, and to overweight the upright human figure with an immense quantity of hair massed into a solid lump is to distort that fitness without which there is no harmony or beauty. As a rule, it may be said that it is in better taste to braid the hair closely to the head than to let it fall or fly about the face, for hair flying about suggests untidiness and want of cleanliness, although it should not be braided tightly, for to plaster the hair down upon the head till it resembles a metal cap cannot be in good taste either. Also a great mistake is made when it is supposed that short persons can be made to look taller by piling up a quantity of hair, for the only result is to put the face in the wrong place. A dwarf a foot high would still appear to be but a foot high, though a structure ten feet high were put on his head."

Another artistic authority writing on the same subject says—"The size of the head in proportion to the entire height of the body should be one-eighth. Often women with faces too long try to shorten the face by wearing the hair very low on the forehead. Whether the hair shall be worn low or high must depend principally on two things, the setting of the eyes, and the quality of the face. The eyes of a woman should be in the middle of her face. That is, drawing an imaginary line across the top of the head, and another below the chin, it is on an imaginary line exactly half way between those two that the woman's eyes should be set. If they are placed higher the effect approaches masculinity, if lower the effect is towards the infantile type. If the eyes are set too near the top of the head (often the case where the face is too long), the bringing the hair low upon the brow increases the defect. The other thing to be considered is the quality of the face. Sometimes a strong face is brutalised by bringing the hair low, and spiritualised by wearing it high, for often with a strong face the modelling of the forehead is an important and fine feature."

When trying to realise exactly what we are in the way of good looks, we soon come to understand that there are points in our appearance which must be accepted and made the best of; also that there are points which can be improved, charms which may be harmlessly developed, and defects which may be either cured or lessened. It will be well to take these points one by one.

Amongst the things which must be accepted as unalterable is the shape of the nose. The nose is the most prominent feature of the human countenance and it has a great deal to do with beauty or ugliness; yet it may truly be said that there are very few people who are entirely satisfied with their own noses. Readers of Miss Alcott's "Little Women" will remember that this popular authoress said that Sister Amy's greatest trouble in life was the shape of her nose. Probably a good many girls when reading this sentence felt a deep sympathy with Sister Amy; for the contemplation and consciousness of their own noses had made them unhappy also. Unfortunately also, the ugliness of an ugly nose can never be redeemed by "expression."

A plain face is often rendered beautiful by the expression it wears. As a popular writer has said, "The plain mouth may break into a smile to touch the coldest heart with a gleam of sympathetic joy; the dullest eyes may light up with a radiance wholly unlooked for," but there is no hope of an ugly nose being modified in this way. Nor is there any possibility of hiding or disguising this unfortunate member if one would wish to do so; it stands in the centre of the face "like a lighthouse on a rocky coast," the cynosure of all eyes. The only way of dealing with it is to accept it.

The colour and shape of the eyes is another detail which has to be accepted. The eyes are the windows of the soul; they bring us into communication with the outside world; they are the source of untold pleasure and delight. Yet it is not possible to increase the beauty of the eyes by artificial means that are not harmful. Most of the methods adopted by quacks for producing unusual brightness of the eyes are dangerous, and likely to affect the heart. We read, it is true, that the Turks regularly slit the outer corners of the eyelids of girl babies to make the eyes larger, and it is even believed by some that small eyes can be gradually enlarged by gently drawing the lids apart every night and morning. The truth is, however, that health and strength are the best beautifiers; pure blood and thorough circulation with temperate habits of life make the eyes clear and brilliant, and a brisk walk on a cold day will make them flash and glow, while ill-health alters the eyes sooner than anything. To take care of the sight is to preserve the beauty of the eyes; people who cannot see easily get into the way of half closing their eyes, a habit which would spoil the most charming features.

Though little can be done to increase the beauty of the eyes themselves something may be done for the brows and eyelashes, and upon them much of the apparent beauty of the eyes depends. The eyebrows should be brushed carefully every morning with a soft brush in the line of their growth, and if they are scanty a drop of almond oil or a touch of vaseline will frequently make them thicker. In order to strengthen and lengthen the eyelashes we may clip the points from the lashes every month. This method is particularly efficacious in youth.

A beautiful complexion is a great aid to beauty, and we could scarcely fail to take pleasure in looking at even the plainest features if they were covered with a smooth, clear, velvety skin free from spot or wrinkle. Fortunately, it is possible to do much for the improvement and preservation of the complexion. Spots and pimples are a great annoyance, but they are generally only a sign of imperfect digestion and impure blood. The way to get rid of them is to improve the general health, and to keep the pores of the skin open, so that impurities shall be carried off. To this end Turkish baths taken at regular intervals are of great value to those who, acting under medical advice, are able to take them. If a real Turkish bath cannot be enjoyed a warm soapy bath taken at least twice a week, in the course of which the body is rubbed briskly all over with a loofah or flesh brush is the next best thing, for it promotes perspiration in other parts than the face and so carries off secretions. Some people have a great fear of touching the face with water and still more with soap. This is a fatal mistake. Soft lukewarm water with pure soap gently but thoroughly applied with a soft rubber, the face being made perfectly dry with a soft towel, is the best of all cosmetics. It is on record that there was once a great beauty whose complexion was the boast of her friends and the envy of her foes. She was asked again and again to say what she used to produce this delightful result, but she never would give up her secret. Not until after her death at the age of ninety was it discovered that the only "chemical" she ever employed was pure soft water applied every day.

Valuable as water unquestionably is it should be employed judiciously. Authorities tell us that neither cold water nor hot water should be used for the face. Cold water makes the skin rough and coarse, hot water produces wrinkles. Even with lukewarm water the skin should not be roughly rubbed. It should be treated tenderly. Gentle friction is best suited to it.

Wrinkles are greatly dreaded by individuals who wish to look nice, and if we desire to prevent wrinkles we must prevent the skin becoming hard and dry. The story goes that a celebrated beauty used to make a practice of spending one day out of every ten in bed, in order that gentle perspiration might ward off wrinkles. To this end it has been recommended also that in washing the face friction should be upwards instead of downwards, and to prevent the formation of crows-feet it should be from the temple to the nose, instead of *vice versâ*. People who spend much of their time in hot rooms would do well to have vases filled with warm water placed here and there, in order to keep the air moist. Hot dry close air is as injurious to the skin as it is to the lungs. It is a great mistake to fill up wrinkles with powder. Powder scarcely ever hides wrinkles, it only draws attention to them, and it certainly makes them worse. Paint also ruins the complexion. Like cosmetics, it produces an effect exactly opposite to the one intended.

Some people are made uncomfortable, and their complexions are spoilt by what are known as "black-heads." These unsightly little black specks sometimes collect in great numbers, and they are not beautiful by any means. It is to be noted that these specks generally occur with people who have large pores, the mouths of which become choked up with dust. Many remedies are recommended for them; but perhaps the only effectual way of getting rid of them is gently to squeeze them out, one or two at a time when the skin is soft after a bath or after perspiration, and then to prevent their forming again by taking hot salt water baths regularly, living on wholesome, plain diet, and helping the skin to act in other parts of the body than the face, by employing friction night and morning all over. To squeeze out these small points is somewhat painful no doubt, but the operation may be rendered less painful by gently touching the spot with

oil at night to soften the secretion, and then adopting measures to promote natural perspiration. When the defect is not very pronounced, these gentle measures are sometimes sufficient without anything else, and when the pores are once free, it is easy to keep them so.

The mouth is a most important feature of the human countenance, and no one could be called ugly who had a beautiful mouth and a beautiful smile. Yet the beauty of the mouth depends to a great extent upon the condition of the teeth, and the condition of the teeth depends very much upon their being reasonably treated. People who make a practice of constantly sucking common sweets (products which are too often adulterated with deleterious chemicals), of drinking hot fluids; who do not brush their teeth regularly; and who take no steps to arrest decay when it has commenced, must expect to lose their teeth, and also to suffer pain while the process goes on. They simply endure the effects of their own foolishness.

The art of dentistry has been brought to great perfection in these days, and it is sometimes said that "the resources of art can repair the ravages of time." This, however, is not the case. Artificial teeth may be very white and regular, and they may fit so well that they enable the wearer to masticate with ease, but they rarely suit the face as well as do the natural teeth. They are apt to draw the mouth, and if they are not "set" exactly in the right position, if they are either too large and prominent, or too far backward, or even too even and faultless, they proclaim themselves for what they are, and thus they suggest age. It is far wiser to give reasonable and intelligent care to the teeth which nature has bestowed upon us, than it is to trust to the skill of the dentist to furnish us with new ones. Teeth that are hopelessly decayed, especially in front, are a great disfigurement, one of the greatest disfigurements that can be, and the unfortunate person who possesses them is often so painfully conscious of them, that she forms a habit of compressing the lips when speaking or smiling hoping to hide them, and thus makes them appear even worse than they are.

The care of the teeth should commence in childhood; little children should be taught by their parents to brush their teeth twice a day, as a matter of course, just as they are taught to wash their hands. At the first sign of irregularity of growth or decay the child should be taken to a skilful dentist, and even should no such difficulty occur his teeth should be inspected by the dentist every six months. Care of this sort exercised betimes is of the greatest use and value.

Even more important than the inspection of a dentist is the daily care and attention bestowed on the teeth. Opinions differ so much about what should be done and what should not be done to preserve the teeth, that one is glad to take refuge behind authority in the matter. The following directions were published in the "Book of Health" (Cassell). They are from the pen of a dentist of repute, and may be relied on.

The teeth should be thoroughly cleansed at least twice a day with a brush of only moderate hardness, and if the teeth are inclined to decay between, or there are fillings between them, floss silk should be carefully passed through, so as to thoroughly cleanse the surfaces. Any place where food habitually lodges, and whence it is not properly removed, is sure to decay sooner or later; but teeth rarely decay on a fully exposed surface. The most scrupulous cleanliness is the best of all preservatives for the teeth, and the more delicate they are, the greater the need of frequent and thorough brushing, a thing which can hardly be overdone, although it is possible by the use of excessively hard brushes to inflict some injury upon the gums, and to drive their thin edges back from the necks of the teeth.

A tooth-powder should fulfil two requirements: it should be soapy, so as to remove the viscid mucus of the gums, and it should be a fine polishing powder, free from gritty particles which could cut into the teeth. These requirements are sufficiently met by a powder composed of precipitated chalk, with which some dried soap has been combined, and the mixture agreeably scented. In special conditions of the gums other medicaments may be added, but this is sufficient for healthy mouths. When acid medicines are being taken it is a good plan to wash the mouth out with an alkali, which can be conveniently obtained by adding a teaspoonful of carbonate of soda to the contents of a water bottle. The various salts of iron stain the teeth, but unless given in an acid form do not attack them, and the stain can be subsequently removed. Gums that are inclined to be spongy are much benefited by brisk rubbing with the fingers, and astringents may at the same time be rubbed in, such as tannin and myrrh. To rinse out the mouth with largely diluted Condy's Fluid will be found both efficacious and agreeable. Of course you will be careful not to swallow any of these things!

Such are the methods recommended to the consideration of those who, like Jenny Distaff, would wish to be "always beautiful." They are simple enough, all will agree, and they can be employed with little effort and with no difficulty. Yet in the long run they will be found far more efficacious than more pretentious methods, and while doing good they will do no harm.

A Summer Day's Dream.

SONG FOR TENOR.

Words by H.

Music by CHARLES W. PEARCE, Mus. D., Cantab.

VOICE.

PIANO.

p

1. At the sleep - y riv - er's
2. Queen with mel - low sun-light
3. Au-tumn pass'd on noise-less

Andante languido.

p

feet,..... Where the woods and corn-fields meet,..... Where the deep - est sha - dows play, There we
crown'd,... Queen with fra - grant gar-lands bound,.... Queen by right of state - ly mien, Beau - ty,
wing,..... Win - ter glad - den'd in - to spring;... Then the woods and sha - dy ways Miss'd us

f

met one summer's day.
grace, and sweet nine-teen.
in the sum-mer days.

mf Più mosso.

Gracious, state-ly, smil-ing,
All the land was full of
In the white house on the

f

sfz

amorevole.

Più mosso.

fair, Ros - es bloom-ing in her hair, Flow'rs be - neath her dain - ty feet,
bloom, Leaf, and fruit, and rich per - fume; All the heav'n was full of glee,
hill There my queen is reign-ing still— Gra-cious, state - ly, smil-ing, fair,

parlando.

accel. e agitato.

She—of all the flow'rs most sweet—..... Pass'd me as I mus-ing stood In the
Sunlight, warmth, and me-lo - dy ;..... And the wav - ing mea-dow-sweet Laugh'd be -
Jew-els gleaming in her hair—..... While I let the moments pass, Ly-ing

accel. e agitato.

accel. *rall.* *Tempo primo.* *p*

sha - dow of the wood, Paus'd,..... Paus'd be -
- - neath our care-less feet, While,..... While the
in the long, cool grass, Think - - - - - - - - ing,..... Think-ing,

accel. *rall.* *Tempo primo.*

cres - - - - - - cen - - - - - - do.

- - side the riv-er's brink,..... Bent her gold - en head to drink ;..... Paus'd be - -
joy - ous birds a - bove..... Sang tri - umph - ant hymns of love ;..... While the
now the dream is o'er,..... 'Twas a sha - dow, no-thing more ;..... Think - ing,

cres - - - - - - cen - - - - - - do.

f *dim.* *Verses 1 & 2.* *Last verse.*

- - side the riv - - er's brink, Bent her golden head to drink.
joy - - ous birds a - - bove Sang tri-umphant hymns of love.
now the dream is o'er, 'Twas a shadow, no-thing more.

f

HOW FORTUNES ARE MADE.

"HOW can I make a fortune?"

This is an inquiry that is more often made mentally than spoken, but it is heard at times, and it is one many have an interest in. If those who have made fortunes—using the word with a rather elastic definition—if these could reply, it would be very often found that the means of attainment differed, but the persevering skill behind them was generally found to have been needful. With this, and with health and activity, bodily and mental, fortunes are often made; but these fortunes are as often lost. I knew a man who in fifteen years made a fortune of three-quarters of a million—which his son inherited and spent in ten years! Changes in business life, in centres of commerce, in methods of production, are now very frequent, and nearly every one of these gives opportunity for the acquisition of much wealth to those who can "seize the moment by the foremost top." But it needs skill to discern the changes and their effect, and faith to follow out a projected course that will lead to fortune in the opinion of its planner. It is curious and instructive to trace the methods in which fortunes are made, but it is a process which does not confirm the popular opinion that "lucky accidents" are most frequently the means. It is true that some men are born rich, some inherit riches, and a very few have riches thrust upon them. But more generally a fortune is the outcome of a life's work; and, not seldom, it is the result of the efforts of father and son. Nor is fortune confined to those who follow one calling or trade.

An illustration will show this. Fifty years ago, three men lived on one northern river who each became literally millionaires. One was a Welshman, a worker in iron-works, a second was a corn merchant, the third was also in the grain trade. The two first became partners, had ten years of struggling in the iron trade, sought for and found fresh supplies of ironstone, and in a score of years each became a millionaire, and one of the two died a Member of Parliament. The third left the grain trade, embarked largely in the chemical manufacture, and died recently, owning an estate, won by hard work, worth a million and a quarter. These men were not very highly educated, not very learned, nor personally gifted in great degree—they had simply dogged decision and untireable industry. Another illustration; a small manufacturer in a northern town dreamt of better communication than that by the road, guided popular desire for it to the consummation of a railway, invested largely, for his means, in it; then in the mineral districts it opened out, his sons followed in his steps, two of his grandsons and one of his great grandsons are to-day Members of Parliament, whilst a great granddaughter is a countess. It is not by blind chance, but by persistent search and continuous effort, that fortunes are won.

It is singular how often the gainers of fortunes have changed their trades and occupations. Lord Armstrong was a lawyer before he turned his thoughts to hydraulics and those constructive works which have given him wealth and fame. Sir Henry Bessemer's early work had more to do with the devising of stamps for the Government than with the production of ingot iron. Minton was apprenticed to an engraver before he began to manufacture earthenware. The Peases of Darlington were wool-spinners before they became coalowners, iron-masters, and bankers; and one of the leading ship-builders in the kingdom commenced his business career and laid the foundation of his fortune in the drapery business.

Fortunes are seen to be made in many branches of commerce. James Gordon Bennett is one proof that the newspaper press enriches in America, just as the names of Walter, Levy, and Baines show similar successes in this country; Crossley and carpets are familiar in association, and led to golden results; the manufacture of starch has enriched the Reckitts of Hull; the production of biscuits has given fortunes to the Palmers of Reading; the Bairds, now of Ury, found gold in iron; and at least one instance is known of a fortune being made from the production of "artificial alizarine."

Nor is it entirely to new ideas being brought into play that fortunes are traceable. Many inventors had tried locomotive building before George Stephenson, but he had the sagacity to follow up what he considered practical, to invest his earnings in a locomotive factory, in a coal-mine, and in stone quarries, and the wealth resulting was the reward of his own labour and of the shrewd investments of what he did not need. His mode of living was at all times moderate; his earnings increased with his fame and with the increase of the railway system; and thus the enlargement of his fortune was a mere question of time.

Another example is afforded of methods of making a fortune by the well-known instance of one of the leading financiers who heard in France of the result of a great battle, who posted express to the coast, thence sailed across to England, arriving before the news did in those pre-telegraph days. He bought stocks largely, and realised vast profits when stocks and funds rose on the arrival of the news of the British victory. Contrast this with the method of a gentleman still living, who began life as a mason, who took small sub-contracts on public works, then larger contracts; who rented first a quarry for the stone he needed, and then a cement works for that material; and so gradually and surely, by safe invest-

ment, enlarged the area of his work, until he is now one of the greatest railway contractors of to-day.

There is another method of fortune-making—that of the utilization of products that were wasted: a method which has in it the elements of many a romance. The story of Mr. Lister—now Lord Masham—and the silk waste that was sold for rubbish, that led to the investment of a quarter of a million sterling in machinery for converting it into fabrics costly and beautiful, has been well told; the allied story of Sir Titus Salt and the alpaca is even better known. Out of hydrochloric acid—once wasted in the production of soda—the fortunes of the Tennants of Glasgow grew; and, very recently, the "Chance-process" for the utilisation of alkali-waste in the production of a very pure sulphur appears to be yielding golden results. Mining and shipping are branches of commerce and adventure that have often led to fortune, but that cannot be even briefly touched upon here, though the stories of success and failure are almost as romantic as the tales in the Arabian Nights.

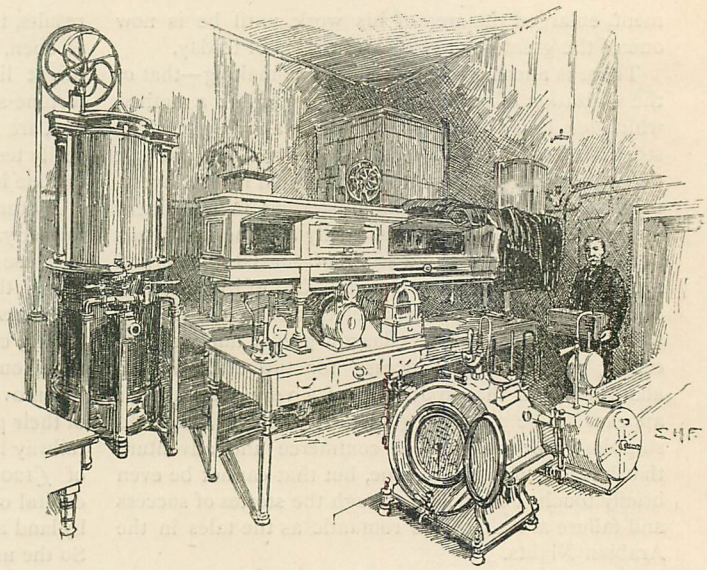
A very natural and a very fitting question is this—Does the result justify the effort? The reply is—That depends on the use made of the fortune. One millionaire who died recently lived "only to make money," the words quoted being those of a near kinsman, who is his executor. Another merchant who partly made and partly inherited a fortune very differently uses his wealth. His income is now assured: it is about £4,000 yearly, one-half of which is given to religious, philanthropic, and charitable objects, and the other half is devoted to personal and family use. Does the result justify the effort? In the training of mind to judge of results, in the endeavour to win success in a race that is open, there are developed powers that otherwise might lie dormant; so that the exercise needed in fortune-seeking, and the full use of powers and faculties, are in themselves desirable, but the acquirement is really tested in its usefulness by the way in which the fortune is used.

Fortunes are probably more rapidly made now than formerly, and so there is the more opportunity for the wise use of the acquired gold. As commerce is enlarged, the uses of wealth are greater and more potent, the interest larger. The early bankers (Childs and others) carried on business under their old-fashioned signs on a comparatively small scale; but now the "turn-over" of the modern banks is millions where that of their predecessors was thousands. The first public railway had a total subscribed capital, at its inception, of £120,900; but its successor has now a paid-up capital of £60,300,000. The great carrying companies by land and sea have enlarged the area of investments. So the making of fortunes is expedited, the telegraph and the steamship, quickening communication, aid in the more rapid use of capital, and stimulate its growth. It is probable that more rapid accretion and quicker dispersal of fortunes will lessen the danger of acquiring that "love of money" which Scriptural authority and many a modern proof show to be the root of evil. Those who, in Burns's phrase, "assiduous wait" upon Dame Fortune are now more rapidly repaid, and with health of body and brain, and with the desire to seize opportunities as well as to wait patiently and search diligently for them, fortunes are more easily made in most occupations than they used to be in the past.

CONCERNING THE STANDARDS.

In a quiet corner of Old Palace Yard, right under the shadow of Westminster Abbey, there modestly hides one of the most interesting of the Government offices. The Standards Department of the Board of Trade, which has long been there located, is in singular contrast to most other branches of the State, for it is of antiquarian and scientific, as well as of practical, value. One of its distinctive features is the museum, which contains many curious relics, ancient and modern, illustrative of our system of weights and measures The most ancient standard here preserved is a small bronze weight, contained in a conical box, which is inscribed "*grana pro auro*." This is believed to belong to the time of Edward I. It was used as the standard pennyweight in the fourteenth century. The standards here which rank next in age date from the reign of Henry VII. These include an octagon yard-measure, marked "H," and having lines roughly cut in it, denoting $\frac{1}{16}$th yard, and also inches. This standard is probably the same length as the old standard yard, and is only $\frac{1}{100}$th of an inch shorter than the present Imperial standard. Close at hand are also the standard corn bushel and corn gallon referred to in Act xii. Henry VII. cap 5, viz., "It pleaseth the King's Highness to make a standard of a bushel and a gallon to remain in his said Treasury for ever." These are manufactured of gun-metal, and are elegant examples of founders' work of the period. There are no standard weights at Westminster of the time of Henry VII., but in the Albert Museum at Exeter there is preserved an old Exchequer 14 lb. avoirdupois weight of that monarch's

reign. In the Harleian MS. at the British Museum there is a copy of an ancient table of weights and measures of the time of Henry VII., which was hung on a wall in "Ye Star Chambre" at Westminster. From that table it appears that the scale of avoirdupois now in use is precisely the same—viz., 1, 2, 4, 7, 14, 28, and 56 lbs. It would seem that there was more uniformity of measurement during the reign of Henry VII. than in the time of Queen Anne and George II. In pursuance of the commands of Queen Elizabeth, new standards of troy and avoirdupois weight were constructed by a jury of Goldsmiths of the city of London in the year 1574. Their verdict may be seen at the British Museum. According to the royal proclamation, the weights then used were uncertain, "to the great slander of the realm and decency of many, both buyers and sellers." Queen Elizabeth's standards include troy weights from 256 ozs. down to ⅛th oz., and avoirdupois standards from 112 lbs. down to 1 lb. Copies of these were sent to the principal towns, and all persons were required to use weights agreeing with them. The royal proclamation containing this order was directed to be read during service at every church twice a year for four years. There are also at the Standards Office the Exchequer yard and the Exchequer ell (dated 1601), together with the matrix or bed for them; likewise standard measures of capacity, consisting of the Winchester bushel and gallon for grain, and the standard ale quart of Queen Elizabeth. Coming down to the time of Queen Anne, we find that in 1707 a new standard wine gallon was legalised owing to disputes as to the legal contents of that measure. At that period the ancient practice declared by Magna Charta was reverted to—viz., "there shall be throughout our realm one measure of wine, and one measure of ale, and one measure of corn." This standard is made of bronze, and is of elegant casting.



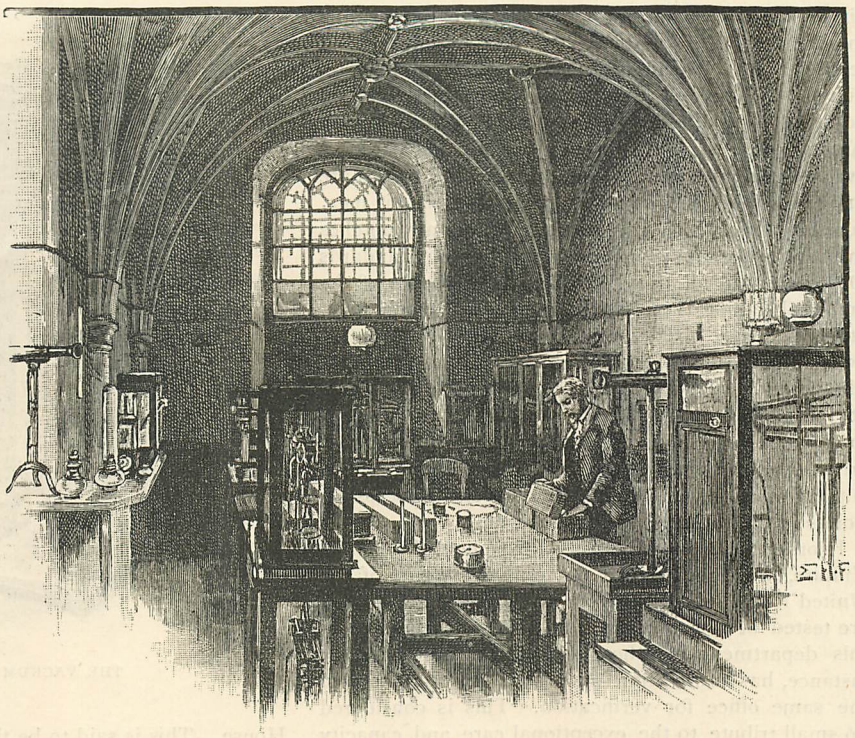
STANDARDS DEPARTMENT, BOARD OF TRADE. GAS-TESTING APPARATUS—PHOTOMETER ROOM.

CORNER OF A CASE IN THE MUSEUM,

Showing King Henry VII.'s gallon (1), bushel (3), and (octagonal) yard (4); Queen Elizabeth's gallon (2), cwt. (5), 7 lb. (6), pint (7), and ell-bed with ell-rod (9); and Queen Anne's wine gallon (8), which is still the standard for the United States.

In 1758, as recorded in Lord Carysfort's report from the Weights and Measures Committee, new standards of the yard and of the avoirdupois weights were made, and ordered to be kept by the clerk of the House of Commons. From the report of Commissioners, presented to both Houses of Parliament in 1841, it appears that, in consequence of the burning of the legislative palace, new standards were required. The actual Imperial standards now in use were accordingly made under the direction of her Majesty's Treasury, and were legalised by the Standards Act of 1855. There are four carefully-preserved copies of these. One set, packed in a fire-proof, coffin-like box, is built into the side wall of the main staircase in Westminster Palace—the place being marked by an inscription in brass. Although there is no statutory requirement that this parliamentary standard of the pound-weight and yard-measure must be periodically

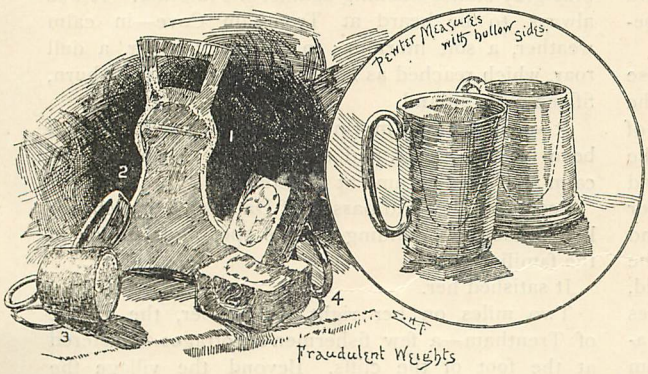
inspected, yet at least once in every twenty years an official inspection—when the Speaker of the House of Commons is present—is found to be practically necessary. The period for this official examination is now just past, and these long buried standards have once more been disinterred for the purpose of inspection. The model pound-weight is a little cylinder of platinum, wrapped up in the smoothest Swedish tissue-paper to prevent grazing, enclosed in a bronze box, and that again enclosed in a silver-gilt case.



BASEMENT OF THE JEWEL HOUSE, NOW USED AS A WEIGHING ROOM.

Besides containing the accurate weights and measures which have been authorised from time to time, the Standards Office also treasures, for the warning of the unscrupulous, a collection of false weights and measures, on account of which fraudulent traders have been punished by fine or imprisonment. Here we have evidence of varied shades and developments of roguery; light weights partially hollow, or lined with cork—some of them deficient to the extent of 30 per cent.; other weights unduly loaded, so as to favour the purchaser of metals; beer-mugs with false bottoms, etc.

The minute accuracy insisted upon in the ultimate tests is well illustrated by the use of a complicated and delicate apparatus known as the "vacuum balance," which is said to be the only instrument of the kind in existence, and cost £250. The apparently idle question has sometimes been asked, Which is the heavier, a pound of cork or a pound of lead? One is naturally disposed to answer that, although very different in bulk, both must be of the same weight. Yet there is a difference, explained by the fact that the precise weight of a substance depends upon the weight of air it displaces. On account, therefore, of the larger vacuum it creates, the pound of cork is heavier *in vacuô* than the pound of lead. In order to keep clear of all such disturbing influences, and arrive at infallible accuracy, the Act of 1878 requires the standard pound weight to be tested *in vacuô;* hence the use of a vacuum balance from which all air has been excluded.

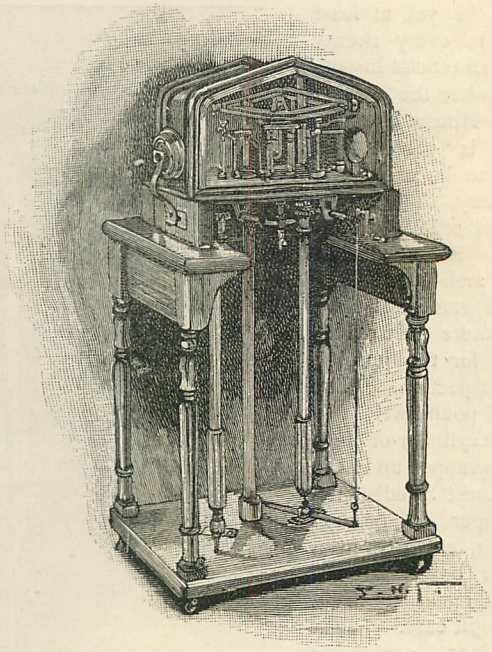


(1) Brass weight cut in two, showing interior hollowed out and filled with lead. (2) Brass pound weight, with hollow bottom soldered on. (3) Iron weight cast hollow, and plugged with cork. (4) Iron weight, apparently perfect, but actually enclosing a large piece of wood.

In a speech delivered not long ago, Lord Salisbury described the land as being covered with inspectors. There were recently no fewer than 1,500 appointed by local authorities to look after weights and measures. They have to undergo, under the supervision of the Standards Office, an examination as to their technical fitness, and the law also requires that the local standards provided for their guidance must be tested in the same department once every five years by comparison with the Government standards. Here we see all the appliances requisite for this and kindred purposes, such as the means of testing gas-meters, etc., the illuminating power of gas—which must give, in model burners, an intensity of light equal to

sixteen sperm candles—and also of testing the inflammability of petroleum in different degrees of temperature. Unerring exactness is, of course, required in the screw threads for watches, which are adjusted according to the standards of the British Association. Screws in use for engineering purposes are now generally adjusted in accordance with what are known as the Whitworth standards. All wire is measured by sizes which correspond with certain notches in the Birmingham wire gauge plate. At the Standards Office we find all these; likewise a duplicate of the Imperial standards of length—inch, yard, perch, pole, etc.—which are fixed into the boundary wall at the north side of Trafalgar Square, behind Nelson's Monument. A copy of the same is laid down at the Guildhall. So often are these two referred to by visitors from the country and others, that arrangements have been made for laying down authorised copies of these standards at easily-accessible points in the leading provincial towns.

In order to secure uniformity throughout the British Empire, the standards for not only every part of the United Kingdom, but also for India and the Colonies. are tested at Westminster. So high is the repute of this department in other countries that Russia, for instance, has more than once sent her standards to the same office for verification. This is considered no small tribute to the exceptional care and capacity of the superintendent of the department, Mr. Chaney, who is regarded as probably the best living authority on the whole subject of weights and measures. His courteous guidance through rather labyrinthine premises leads the visitor, by a subterranean passage, under a corner of Dean's Yard to the ancient Jewel House. This is said to be the only part of the Abbey saved from the fire by which the original edifice was destroyed. During three centuries it was used for keeping the regalia at coronation times, and as a place of deposit for peers' records. Before passing into the hands of the civil authority, this quaint strong room was the refectory of the Abbey monks.

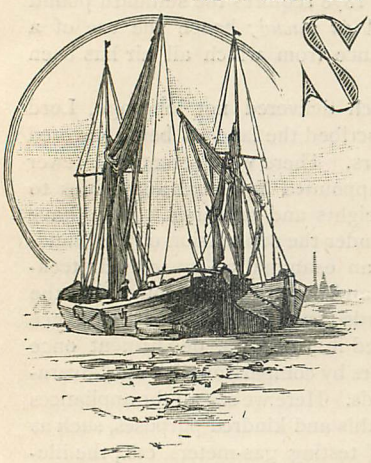


THE VACUUM BALANCE.

FORMED FOR CONQUEST.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

"AS OCEAN BEAT THE STONE."



SHE looked down on the sea, two hundred feet below.

The cliff rose sheer from the blue-grey stones of the beach. The railing that had been put up for protection round the edge of the bare rock was old, and in places broken; but Damaris Lemarcham leant against it with the security of custom, and looked down with a steady eye at the waves breaking on the beach.

The breakers fell in long, broken lines of white on the pebbly beach; a dull, hollow murmur filled the summer air: a sound produced from the rounded blue-grey stones washing against one another. It was always to be heard at Trentham Cove—in calm weather, a soft murmur; in stormy weather, a dull roar, which reached as far as the town of Hallsburn, fifteen miles inland.

It was a soothing murmur to-day. The weather had been fine for weeks, and the sea was as smooth and calm as it ever became at Trentham.

Scarcely a day had passed of Damaris Lemarcham's life without her standing on this spot and looking at the familiar scene.

It satisfied her.

Two miles on her right, below her, the village of Trentham—a few fishermen's cottages—clustered at the foot of the cliffs. Beyond the village the shores of the bay were covered with trees and bushes to the water's edge. A break in the greens and browns of the foliage showed the Indian red of West Country

soil. On her left the cliffs rose bare and rugged from the beach. Moors, with gorse and heather in patches, stretched away behind her. Here and there the rock broke through the short turf, and stood out a queer outline against the sky.

The sea glinted and shone in the afternoon sun; the small clouds made purple shadows in its green depths.

Damaris had stood so long without a movement that the sheep had gradually drawn close to her. Their tearing the grass to eat made a pleasant sound in the hot, drowsy afternoon. A seagull flashed out from the cliff with a shrill cry, and made her start.

She turned from the edge of the cliff, and took the footpath which led to the village.

She was above the average height of a woman—or, perhaps, her slightness and the carriage of her head made her appear so—and she walked with a peculiar light gracefulness. But Damaris Lemarcham had never been called beautiful or pretty, or even good-looking, in the twenty-six years of her life; yet her features, her complexion, her hair, were better than those of many a woman who is considered a beauty. Perhaps the want of self-consciousness about Damaris was what made her appear, if not plain, at least not pretty. Every woman has, or should have, a regard as to how she appears in others' eyes; and Damaris had none. She was utterly indifferent to what might be thought or said of her. It was not an assumed feeling: it had grown with her growth and strengthened with years.

Her face hardened, and the smile with which she had turned away from the cliff's edge left her lips as she crossed the stile separating the moor from the road leading down to the village.

The character of the scenery changed as the road grew steeper. Trees—first singly, and then in clusters—grew on either side; a hedge of fuchsia nearly buried the first cottage. A sudden turn brought her to the top of the steep village street. She stopped at the first house: one with a balcony covered with a luxuriant Virginia creeper. On the door was a well-polished brass plate, with "Henry Lemarcham, Surgeon," upon it. The passage was dark and stuffy, and a smell of fried fish pervaded the house.

"Tea's been on for half-an-hour, Damaris. You are always late," said a high sharp voice from an inner room.

Damaris walked into the room without replying.

A woman—at first sight she looked younger than Damaris—was seated at the tea-tray. A handsome man, with florid complexion and pompous manner, sat opposite her.

"The fish is nearly cold, Damaris," he said, with a voice and accent which showed he belonged to a higher social station than the woman. "If you come in half-an-hour late, you must expect to find things cold."

"I thought you would have waited for my cousin," said Damaris indifferently, seating herself at the table.

"Wait! I ain't going to wait for paupers," said the woman, with a scornful sniff. "Your father has to go out. That brat of Levenick's is taken ill again, and he was sent for. The less folks pay, the more they expect doctors to dance attendance on them."

Mrs. Lemarcham—she was Lemarcham's second wife, and the step-mother of Damaris—drank her tea with an angry gulp.

She was a dark woman, with red cheeks and large brown eyes. As a girl of nineteen, she had been the beauty of Trentham Cove, but she had coarsened with years, and it was only in her own estimation and in her husband's that she still ranked as a beauty. How a well-educated, well-born man like Henry Lemarcham could have fallen in love with underbred Polly Partington is one of those mysteries to be met with in marriages; that after fourteen years of married life he still admired her is a greater one.

He patted her plump cheek as he passed.

"Good-bye, Polly; I shall not be back until ten o'clock," he said.

Of his daughter he took no notice. She was leaning back in her chair, looking out of the window, an absent, indifferent look upon her face.

"Whatever time will this girl come?" said Mrs. Lemarcham peevishly. "I shall let her know from the beginning that I ain't going to put up with any airs. She's a pauper, if she has got grand relations. It's a fine thing her having to fall back on her mother's brother for home and sup. She says that it's only for a few months, or I wouldn't have put up with it."

Mrs. Lemarcham rattled the cups and saucers noisily. Her large hands were loaded with rings and bracelets: some valuable, some only gilt or silver.

"I see you ain't listening, Damaris, but I'll say it, all the same. I call her a pauper, and I tell you, as I've told your father, that I ain't going to put up with her for more than six months. So there!"

She gathered the tea-spoons together, and flung them into the slop-basin with an angry clatter.

"What were you saying?" asked Damaris, turning her indifferent face towards her step-mother.

Mrs. Lemarcham was too angry to answer. She flounced out of the room, banging the door behind her. In a few seconds her voice was heard in the kitchen, rating the servants.

Damaris was twelve years old when her father married for the second time. Child though she was, she had hidden her feelings from everyone, and if she suffered it had been in secret. There had been one fight between the second Mrs. Lemarcham and her step-daughter, and one only. From it the former Polly Partington retired worsted, nor had she attempted again to bring matters to an issue between herself and her step-daughter.

Damaris was suffered to go her own way without restraint.

The sun was setting when Damaris left the house again. There were signs of change in the beautiful weather. A wind was rising, and the sun was burning a copper red among banks of dark cloud on the horizon line.

She paused in the little green verandah, and looked down the street. A few men were at their cottage doors smoking; two women knit and gossiped, stand-

ing bareheaded in the middle of the street. The voices of children at play in the shadow of the stone jetty came shrilly to her ears.

"How long before Jones arrives?" she asked a man coming up the street.

"Not for another hour or more," he answered.

She stepped from the verandah, and took the road by which she had come half-an-hour before. Ten minutes' walk, and she turned into a narrow lane on her left, leading to a small rustic gate. This she opened, and followed the narrow gravelled path to a larger house than the modest entrance-gate indicated. An old man was seated at the open French window, reading. He looked up on hearing her step.

"I thought you could not come this evening, Damaris?"

"The carrier is an hour and a half late. I shall have an hour with you."

"You cannot stay to dinner with me as usual?"

"No. I must return in time for my cousin's arrival."

"Very well. There are some new books in that box, if you care to look at them."

Damaris stepped into the room, selected a book, and drew a chair to the window.

The two read for half-an-hour in silence. The old man was the first to put down his book.

"Do you know anything of your cousin, Damaris?"

"Nothing. She wrote to my father asking whether she might pay us a long visit: that she had been left penniless, and had nowhere to go."

"What is her name?"

"Helen Desborough. Have you met her in London, Mr. Rushton?"

"Desborough — Desborough? If she is the woman I am thinking of, she is extraordinarily beautiful.

A smile passed over his keen, sharply-marked features, and a twinkle into his piercing dark eyes.

"You and she will not have much in common, Damaris, if she is the woman I think she is."

"Probably not," said Damaris indifferently.

"She can teach you how to dress," he said, looking her up and down with a criticising eye. "You do not do yourself justice in those everlasting blue serges of yours."

"I did not know you disliked blue serge, Mr. Rushton," said Damaris, turning her cool, impersonal gaze on the old man's eager, expressive face.

He laughed and shrugged his shoulders.

"There, there! my dear girl, you do not understand. I believe you have no woman's instincts." A silence fell upon them. Damaris looked neithe hurt nor indignant at Mr. Rushton's words.

"Had your cousin no other relations? She will hardly care for Trentham Cove after town," Mr. Rushton continued, returning to the subject of conversation.

"Her father's people refused to do anything. He died in debt, and there had been quarrels in the family about money matters. We had heard nothing of the Desboroughs since my aunt's death, ten years ago, until we received this letter from my cousin, asking us to take her in for six months."

"And what then?"

Damaris shook her head.

"I do not know. That was all she said in her letter. She did not give us much information."

"What does Mrs. Lemarcham say to it?"

A smile passed between Mr. Rushton and Damaris.

"Stormy weather, I imagine," he said drily.

Damaris rose to her feet.

"Good-bye," she said. "I must be off, or there will be no one to meet my cousin."

He walked with her to the gate, and stood there watching her down the lane.

"She ought to be a beautiful woman—but—she is not," he said to himself.

Mr. Rushton had known Damaris Lemarcham since she was five years old.

For twenty-one years he had stayed in Trentham Cove for the summer and autumn, from May to November. On his first visit to the place he had seen Damaris at her grandfather's, the vicar of Trentham, and he had been struck with the child's intelligence. But he did not care for children, and would quickly have forgotten Damaris if it had not been for circumstances. Between himself and the vicar, Mr. Bartlett, sprang up a friendship, and to Mr. Rushton the vicar confided his fears that his son-in-law, Lemarcham, would marry again, and would not choose a suitable step-mother for the child Damaris.

"She will be alone when I am gone, Rushton; and Lemarcham is not the sort of man to bring up such a child as Damaris. Will you keep an eye upon her, and be a friend to her?"

Rushton had promised, and on the vicar's death he made a point of seeing the child once a week during the summer months he spent in Trentham. Gradually the weekly visit had become daily, until it settled into a custom that Damaris should come in the afternoon, and stay to dinner with the old man, to be escorted back to her father's house by Mr. Rushton's manservant, Williams. Mr. Rushton was a clever, intellectual man, and he trained Damaris to be a companion to him. The benefit had been mutual, and between the two had sprung up a warm friendship, which to the old man and the young woman was the warmest affection either had known since childhood.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

"BE ITS BEAUTY
ITS SOLE DUTY!"

THE night was drawing in gloomy and threatening as Damaris walked down the road to her father's house. At the turn which led to the village street, a group of men were talking and smoking by the side of a covered carrier's cart. A pile of luggage stood in the middle of the road.

"Your cousin's come, Miss," said the man, unharnessing the horses.

"Her's brought plenty of loogage," one of the

loungers said, pointing with his pipe-stem at the heaped-up boxes in the road.

Damaris hurried on without answering.

"Yon's a haughty jade," said the man who had remarked upon the luggage; "her's never got a word, good, bad, or indifferent, for the likes of we."

Her step-mother passed her in the passage.

"I am going to make your cousin a nice cup of tea. She's in the drawing-room."

Mrs. Lemarcham bustled away, with ribbons flying. The appearance of the "pauper" had worked a radical change in Mrs. Lemarcham's attitude.

"'YOU ARE MY COUSIN, I SUPPOSE?'" (*p.* 290).

"'Tis all book-larning with her."

"Aye, or young Trevarthick up to Horley Cross," said the first speaker, with a coarse laugh. A loud guffaw greeted this sally. Damaris was not popular with the fishermen of Trentham Cove.

She heard a languid voice speaking as she entered her father's house.

"Thanks; please do not trouble. Well, if you will——," with a murmur.

Certainly no one could have looked more unlike a pauper than Helen Desborough when Damaris entered the room her step-mother called a drawing-room. She was lying on the hard, uncomfortable sofa, a travelling cloak lined with silk thrown back from her shoulders; her grey dress and hat were not of a cut and make showing poverty. On the floor by her side was an open dressing-case, with gold-mounted cut-glass bottles. She was smelling the contents of one of them.

"How do you do? You are my cousin, I suppose?" she said, holding out a long white hand, without rising.

"How long will it be before the tea is made?" she continued. "It was such a fearful drive from Hallsburn. I believe we took three hours coming here. Luckily, there was a good-looking young fisherman in the conveyance, or I should have been bored to death. Would you mind unbuttoning my boots? I could not bring my maid; she was quite rude about her wages. I am sure she stole enough from me to pay her wages many times over."

Damaris unbuttoned the high-heeled thin kid boots.

"Thanks; that is more comfortable. Now, would you mind fetching my slippers? They are in the small bag in the passage—the grey ones lined with pink silk."

Damaris smiled to herself as she fetched the dainty shoes. What would be her cousin's next request?

"I am afraid you must have delayed dinner for me. Directly I have had a cup of tea I will change my dress, and——"

"We do not dine late."

The room was growing dark, and Helen could not see the smile on her cousin's face.

"Not dine late! Why, you are barbarians! What meal do you have, then?"

"We have supper at ten."

"Supper!"

Mrs. Lemarcham came in with a lamp, followed by the servant, carrying tea and bread and butter. The maid stared with open mouth at the beautiful figure and face. The mountings of the dressing-case took her breath away.

Polly Lemarcham was as excited as her servant. Here was a real society lady come to stay with her; better still, she could almost claim relationship with this fashionably-dressed, beautiful woman from the London world of society. The first sight of the smart, well-appointed woman, who languidly asked if she were Mrs. Lemarcham, had scattered to the winds her intentions of treating her as a poor relation. Rather she was a guest to be honoured—to be made much of. How jealous Mrs. Harris and Mrs. Vickers would be when they saw what a grand lady was staying with her, Polly Lemarcham! Mrs. Vickers' cousin from Manchester, about whom she made such a fuss, could not hold a candle for looks or clothes to her husband's niece.

Damaris looked at her cousin. There could be no two opinions about her beauty. A long oval face, with straight clear-cut features, almond-shaped eyes of violet colour, with dark brown lashes and eyebrows, the perfect line of which was not altogether due to nature, a milk-white complexion and bronze-coloured hair, a figure that was now beautiful, but promised one day to become too stout, made up the list of Helen Desborough's charms. But the same might be written with truth of other women with not the tithe of her beauty. She had been called the most beautiful woman in England—probably with justice.

Damaris, looking at her with cool indifference, said to herself that she had never dreamed of such beauty except in a picture or a statue.

A trampling of feet in the passage, and the bumping of boxes, took Mrs. Lemarcham to the door.

"It's your luggage come, Miss—Helen," she said. She hardly dared call this grand lady by her Christian name. "I don't know where it's to go; your room's full already. Perhaps Damaris would take two or three boxes in her room."

"The large black box and the three portmanteaus are the ones I shall not want," said Helen, looking up from her tea.

"They must go in your room, Damaris. There's nowhere else."

"Very well. Put them there," said Damaris.

"Please cut me some more bread and butter. I am famished!"

Helen held out the empty plate.

"Who lives here? What society have you?" she asked, when Damaris brought her a fresh supply of bread and butter.

"I suppose there is nothing you would call society," said Damaris, with a twinkle in her eyes. "We have a vicar, and his wife and their two daughters, the widow of a paymaster in the navy, and Mr. Rushton."

"Mr. Rushton! who is he?"

"He only stays here in the summer. He is seventy."

"Oh! quite an old man! But you must have some young men? There must be someone."

Damaris shook her head.

"Not in the set of people we think society in Trentham Cove. There are one or two young farmers and the captains of small schooners and fishing-smacks, but——"

"Do you never see Mr. Vanburgh?" interrupted Helen.

"Mr. Vanburgh! Do you mean Mr. Vanburgh, of the Court? He has not been in this neighbourhood for years. I never remember seeing him."

"Ah!" said Helen, absently. She stared down into her empty cup with a thoughtful frown.

She looked up suddenly, and met Damaris' cool straight gaze.

"He will be at the Court this autumn," she said.

Mrs. Lemarcham entered the room. She had seen Helen's luggage carried to her bedroom, and had given the men who carried the boxes a highly-coloured description of her niece.

"Your things are up, Helen, and I'll hurry on the supper. You must be famished after your long ride! Shall I carry your bag for you?"

Helen rose to her feet with a rustle of silk, which Mrs. Lemarcham mentally noted as a "silk foundation."

"She won't be down for an hour, Damaris. Did you ever see such a beauty? My! Mrs. Vickers will stare when she sees her with us to-morrow in church! She's putting on a lovely grey velvet now, all lined with pink silk. She says it ain't the fashion to wear mourning long: that she thought a month long enough for her Pa. I wonder where she got the money to buy such dresses? she has hundreds! I

think I'll just run over to Mrs. Vickers, and tell her Helen's arrived."

Mrs. Lemarcham hurried away, and Damaris waited for her cousin's re-appearance.

The drawing-room entirely belonged to her step-mother; it was arranged and furnished to her taste, and Damaris had often heard her remark that "Mrs. Vickers said that it was the prettiest drawing-room in Trentham."

In the centre of the small room was a whatnot, with gaudily-bound volumes of Byron and the poems of Scott placed on green woollen mats. The fireplace was filled with blue and pink shavings. On either side of the fireplace was an armchair of rosewood, covered with emerald green rep. Against the wall was a sofa covered with the same colour, the cushions of pink sateen, ornamented with green bows. A table, with ornaments on green woollen mats, occupied the opposite side of the room. Three small chairs and a painted milking-stool were scattered about the room, each chair with a woollen antimacassar repeating the green of the rep. On the walls were views of Vesuvius in eruption and the Bay of Naples, with arrangements of cheap fans and coloured handkerchiefs between the pictures. Nailed on the door was a striped curtain, tied back with long ends of green and pink ribbon. The gilt frame of the mirror over the mantel-piece was hidden by folds of a similar curtain, tied in many places with bows and ends of cheap pink and green ribbon. The carpet was covered with a pattern of full-blown pink roses. Damaris rarely came into the room. She had a sitting-room of her own upstairs, and seldom sat with her father and step-mother. She had not been in this room for months, and perhaps this, or the incongruity of Helen Desborough with it, made her feel the glaring vulgarity of the room more than usual. She laughed as she looked round at the decorations. What must her cousin think of such a place?

Helen was soon standing in the middle of the drawing-room, looking round and yawning widely.

"Is this your mother's taste?" she asked.

"My step-mother's."

"I forgot she was your step-mother. I wondered how she looked as young as you. When will supper be ready? I am getting hungry."

She threw herself on the sofa, and yawned until every one of her small white teeth were visible.

"I really do not know how I am to exist in this place until November! It is only August now, and there are nearly three months to November. I shall be bored to death."

A man's tread passed the window.

"Here is my father," said Damaris.

Helen sprang to her feet and looked in the glass. A touch to her bronze-coloured hair and a twist to her grey velvet train, and she advanced to meet her uncle, both hands extended, a charming smile on her red lips.

Helen cared nothing for her own sex. She was not jealous of them, or bad-tempered when in their company. She simply overlooked them: they were nothing to her. But the meanest man was not too mean for Helen to exert her powers of fascination upon. It had been said of her that in one country-house where she had stayed the very footmen had fallen in love with her, and Helen had been flattered by the words. Yet she was twenty-four, and still unmarried. What was the reason?

Helen had over-reached herself. Three times she had been engaged, and each time had broken her engagement for a better match. Her father's sudden death had interrupted the best scheme she had planned—only interrupted, not broken, as she had first feared when her penniless condition had forced her to ask hospitality from the uncle whom only necessity brought to her memory. Luckily, matters had gone far enough for her to say where she was going, and, to her delight, to learn that Gerald Vanburgh had estates at Trentham Cove, and meant to visit them in November.

She had therefore come to her uncle's house in a serene, assured state of mind. Her exile and poverty would not last long.

Mr. Lemarcham was charmed with his niece. He could not make enough of her. They talked only to one another throughout supper; and Mrs. Lemarcham and Sarah, had in to wait in honour of the visitor, listened and stared with open ears and eyes. Helen mentioned the Duke of this and the Duchess of that, and told such wicked little tales about them, that the doctor's small household felt raised above the common society of Trentham Cove.

Damaris ate her supper in silence.

It was twelve o'clock before they separated for the night: late indeed for Trentham.

Damaris heard her step-mother's voice talking to her cousin in the next room. Mrs. Lemarcham had offered her services as maid, and they had been accepted without a "Thank you."

"If you will," had said Helen, with a yawn.

The rain was beating against the window-pane—the clouds had kept their promise, and the noise of her step-mother and Helen's chatter mingled with the sound.

Damaris dropped asleep with the confused murmur in her ears.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

"A GIRL THAT LAUGHED IN BEAUTY'S PRIDE."

THE next morning dawned the brighter and fresher for the rain the night before.

Breakfast was carried up to Helen by Mrs. Lemarcham who afterwards again attended on her guest in the quality of maid.

It was Sunday, and the women in bonnets and shawls, the fishermen in ill-fitting black coats and round hats perched on the backs of their heads, streamed up the village street on their way to church and chapel. Damaris, leaning over the balcony railing, waited for her step-mother and cousin, and watched the tall well-made fishermen and their florid wives climb the steep street. Very few saluted the blue serge figure and indifferent face as they passed.

"I can't abear doctor's darter. Her looks at us

as though us was dirt," Mrs. Pollan said to Mrs. Vines, and the sentiment was heartily re-echoed. The doctor's green house drew more attention than usual upon it that morning. Mrs. Vickers had already spread abroad the rumour that Polly Lemarcham was crazed about her husband's niece. "Polly's swans always turn out geese; but I'd like to see her. She ain't left the house yet; there's Damaris Lemarcham waiting for 'em. There's the calling-in bell; if we don't go we shall be late;" and Mrs. Vickers joined Mrs. Harris at her garden gate, and passed up the street.

"You'll be late for church, Miss Lemarcham," she called to Damaris.

"She's queer, is Damaris Lemarcham," she continued, when out of hearing. "Polly says she don't care a brass farthing about dress, or looks, or anything. She's that set on books!"

"What about young Trevarthick?" said Mrs. Harris, with a fat chuckle.

Mrs. Vickers shook her head.

"I can't make out; Polly can't, neither. Ah! you take my word for it, Mary Harris, that Damaris is as queer as her name."

"I don't admire his taste, then. She's nought to look at, to my fancy. Maybe he's got his eye on her little bit of money. The Trevarthicks always go where there's money."

"'Tis only a bit."

"Fifty pounds a year ain't to be despised in these hard times. Hurry up, Mary! or we shall be late."

Stout Mrs. Harris and lean Mrs. Vickers subsided into silence. The steep road took all their breath; as it took Helen Desborough's when she came to make the ascent. Late as they were, several pauses had to be made before the little grey stone church was reached. Mrs. Lemarcham, who liked to be in time, to have a chat with her friends in the churchyard, made no attempt to hurry her guest. She was still engaged in admiring Helen's toilette.

The grey granite church stood in a corner of the Vanburgh Court grounds. The churchyard was full of sailors' graves, with anchors and coils of rope for head-stones. From one corner there was a glimpse of the sea and the roofs of the cottages of Trentham Cove. It was a well-sheltered grave-yard, lying towards the right of the village, away from the bare coast and moors which stretched towards the left.

The church door was open, and the drone of a man's voice reading came forth to meet them. Trentham was not a church-going place; most of the fishermen were Wesleyans, and only one or two farmers and the leading people of Trentham, besides a few labourers, were in the church this morning. The congregation turned their heads when the rustle of Helen's dress filled the small church, and for the rest of the service Helen was the cynosure of all eyes. Such a face and such a dress had never been dreamed of before in Trentham. Helen was accustomed to being looked at; it in no way disturbed her; and she examined the male part of the congregation with deliberate glances. At the female she did not look, but she pressed her lace handkerchief to her lips to hide a smile at the hat of the vicar's daughter.

There was no shortening of the service in Trentham Church. Litany, ante-Communion service, and a sermon of half-an-hour were droned through to the sleepy end. The vicar, Mr. Matthews, was a fair, thin man, with a stoop; he looked what he was—henpecked. Mrs. Matthews and her daughters occupied the pew in front of the Lemarchams. She twisted herself round that she might see Helen the better, and audibly murmured something to her daughter about people being over-dressed. Mrs. Matthews was a vulgar, overbearing woman, who tried to rule the village with a heavy hand. Between her and Mrs. Lemarcham a chronic war waged.

"I ain't going to be brow-beaten and told what to wear by her," Polly Lemarcham declared. "Everyone knows that she was only the butler's daughter up to Vanburgh Court if she did manage to catch that poor Mr. Matthews when he was curate at Lansdown. Others can bow down to her; I shan't;" and Polly kept to her words.

It was the custom in Trentham on a Sunday, when the weather was fine, for the congregation to assemble in the churchyard after the service to discuss the topics of the village.

Mrs. Lemarcham this Sunday morning was seized by her cronies in a flutter of excitement.

"Introduce your niece to me, doctor," said Mrs. Matthews, in the mincing voice she adopted to hide her strong West Country accent. The vicar's wife did not include the doctor in her dislike of Mrs. Lemarcham. Henry Lemarcham was always called the doctor in Trentham; though he was a surgeon, not a doctor.

Mrs. Matthews looked Helen up and down, from the tip of her French kid boots to the wing which adorned her marvellously arranged bronze hair, and which was meant for a head covering.

"You evidently come from London?" said Mrs. Matthews frostily.

"Yes."

"I suppose you will not be long here? You are looking out for a situation as governess?"

Helen was gazing over Mrs. Matthews' head at someone coming down the path.

"Do you hear?" said Mrs. Matthews sharply.

She felt and resented that this niece of the doctor's was paying no more attention to her than if she had been a poor fisherman's wife.

But Helen was looking almost eager. She had turned from Mrs. Matthews, and laid her hand on her uncle's arm.

"Who is that young man?" she said. "Do introduce him to me, uncle. Look! he knows Damaris."

"He is a young farmer of the neighbourhood. Are you——" began Mr. Lemarcham doubtfully, but Helen interrupted him.

"Never mind what he is or what he does. He is handsome: that is all I care about."

"Shocking! Most unladylike!" murmured the vicar's wife, under her breath.

"Mr. Trevarthick—Miss Desborough."

Helen bowed and smiled, and gave him a long look from her violet eyes. Jim Trevarthick was a little dazzled and flustered by the notice from this lovely woman. For a moment he could not recover his ready tongue, debonair manner, and conceit which made him the admiration of the maidens of the country side.

"Would you show me the Vanburgh graves?" she asked softly. "Mr. Vanburgh told me his grandfather and grandmother were buried in this churchyard."

Jim Trevarthick walked by Helen's side over the grass to a distant railed-off corner of the grave-yard. Her uncle, Mrs. Matthews, and her daughters followed; behind them came Mrs. Lemarcham and her friends.

Damaris, seated on a flat tombstone, thought they looked like a flock of barn-yard hens following a brilliant peacock.

Jim Trevarthick found his voice before they reached the Vanburgh graves.

"I hope you are going to stay some time in Trentham," he said gallantly.

"I hope so, too," she said, with a look into his eyes.

Damaris could see Helen's face turned towards Jim Trevarthick. They were grouped round the railings of the Vanburgh graves, Mrs. Matthews on Helen's other side, her daughters and the Trentham people behind. Their voices sounded in a pleasant murmur through the warm summer air; the continuous hum of the sea was a background to the round voices of the West Country.

Helen was interested in the young man Jim Trevarthick; she quickly shook off the vicar (his wife was waiting to seize him and drag him off the grass), and turned her attention to the good-looking young farmer. She could command the homage of a man with her glances, her actions, her tones; and as life to Helen Desborough without a love affair was a dull, wearisome proceeding, she now did her best to rouse in Jim Trevarthick a passion for her. She could easily throw him aside when Gerald Vanburgh came, but until then he would serve to pass the time. She saw him turn his head and look back at her cousin when they passed her, together. Were he and Damaris in love with one another? How delightful! This would add a zest to the game, supposing it wanted zest, but Helen was of opinion that without Damaris she could enjoy herself. He was so very good-looking, and his bold glances delighted her; she disliked a timid man.

There was no fear of Jim Trevarthick showing backwardness in his advances towards a woman. Only one woman in the world had the power of making Jim lower his bold black eyes and silence his ready tongue, and she was a very different woman from Helen Desborough. He had been "taken off his legs," as he expressed it, by Helen Desborough's beauty for the first few minutes, but his confidence in himself quickly returned, and he was ready to claim an ell where she gave an inch.

Outside the churchyard gate the people separated; the vicar, his wife and daughters, and Trevarthick, took the road leading up the hill, the Trentham people turned downwards.

Mrs. Lemarcham had now the opportunity of introducing her friends to Helen. But that young lady barely deigned them a bow; she took her uncle's arm and led the way, talking to him.

Damaris, following behind her step-mother and her friends, heard their conversation.

"Does she really know Mr. Vanburgh?" asked Mrs. Vickers.

"Yes; he's coming here in November, and it's my belief there's a reason not a hundred miles away *why* he's coming," said Mrs. Lemarcham, with visible importance.

"It'll be a rise for her."

"She's beautiful enough to marry a duke!" cried Mrs. Lemarcham. "She's been engaged to a lord and broke it off; he wasn't rich enough."

"My! Well, she'll need some money to dress like that. Did you see how she made up to Jim Trevarthick? Damaris 'd better look out if she——"

"Sh!" said Mrs. Harris, with a warning look at Mrs. Vickers, indicating Damaris behind.

The three ladies dropped their voices.

Helen did not stay to say good-bye to Mrs. Lemarcham's friends. She had disappeared when they reached the door; the jovial, pompous doctor was waiting to shake hands. People always shook hands at meeting and parting in Trentham Cove: it was etiquette.

The early dinner over, Helen retired to her bedroom; Mrs. Lemarcham went across to Mrs. Vickers to talk over Helen; Mr. Lemarcham dropped asleep, and Damaris put on her hat and went to see Mr. Rushton.

He was reading in the same chair and at the open window of the evening before.

"Well?" he said, when she stood before him.

"She has come; she has seen; she has conquered."

"Conquered whom?"

"My step-mother; she has fallen down and worshipped, and so has my father."

"And you?"

Damaris shook her head.

"You do not like her? Humph! Does she like you?"

"She is hardly aware that such a person exists," said Damaris, with a twinkle in her eyes.

Mr. Rushton chuckled.

"She is the woman I thought. Beautiful?"

"I never thought a woman could be so beautiful."

"Dresses well?"

"I suppose so."

"I hope she will work a reformation in you, Damaris. You can learn something from her."

The afternoon passed in the discussion of books, and Helen Desborough was forgotten.

Mr. Rushton, though he lived in Trentham only a few months in the year, had filled his house with valuable pictures, old embroideries, precious books. He loved art and literature, and had impressed his tastes on Damaris. The old man and young woman would

discuss the merits of a painting or the beauty of a piece of Eastern embroidery with a warmth they never showed for anything human.

Everything about Mr. Rushton was well-appointed. Damaris thought how much her cousin would have liked the tea-cups of eggshell china, the noiseless movements of the man-servant, the air of refinement in the room.

"I must call upon your cousin," said Mr. Rushton, answering her thoughts. "What day will Mrs. Lemarcham be out?"

Mr. Rushton held Polly Lemarcham in undisguised horror. He avoided her as he would have done a rattlesnake. "A type of pure, unadulterated vulgarity," he called her.

"Tuesday, I believe," said Damaris. She had been too long accustomed to Mr. Rushton's dread of her step-mother to smile.

"Tuesday I will call. If there should be an alteration in Mrs. Lemarcham's plans, let me know."

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

"I LIKE HIM, BUT HE LOVES ME."

DAMARIS did not leave Mr. Rushton's until sunset. The village was quiet; the fishermen and their wives were in church and chapel. The village street was deserted; only an old man, a cripple, sat in one of the doorways, smoking. Trentham was a primitive place. Trentham folk had no fear of thieves, and though most of the houses were empty the doors stood wide open, inviting any dishonest person to enter. Seven years ago an unlucky tramp had taken from a cottage two mugs and a spoon on a Sunday evening when the villagers were in church. He had been caught a mile from the village, brought back, ducked and stoned, and his life only saved by the efforts of Mr. Lemarcham and a coastguardsman. Since then there had been no thefts committed by strangers in Trentham.

Damaris paused a moment at the door of her father's house, then continued swiftly down the street. She walked to the further end of the stone pier, and seated herself on the edge. The sky was fading from crimson to primrose, and the palest shade of blue-green in the after-glow. A hush lay upon the scene; even the murmur of the sea had sunk into a whisper. Between the pier and the wooded hills on her right the water lay in shadow; a long bar of greenish silver stretched across the horizon. The bare rocks and hills on her left stood out sharply against the tender evening sky, and over all brooded the peace and hush of a country Sunday evening.

A ring of steps on the stones behind her broke the silence. She did not turn her head; a frown appeared on her forehead. She knew to whom the steps belonged.

"I saw you pass the window. I suppose you would not come in when you heard me," said a voice, with a rough note in its ring.

The speaker sat down by her side.

"You thought I should not see you, eh?"

"I did not think about you," said Damaris coolly.

"I suppose I'm beneath your notice," said Jim Trevarthick, bitterly. "You never look or speak to me if you can help it."

Damaris shrugged her shoulders.

"Why can't you care for me? I ain't a bad-looking chap, as fellows go, and I'd make you a good husband, Damaris: I swear I would. You should never have to complain of me. I know I've been a bit wild, but 'twas you that drove me to it. Can't you care for me a little?"

There was no boldness in the black eyes that scanned her indifferent face.

"What is the use of going over the old ground? Years ago I told you I did not care for you. I shall never alter, Mr. Trevarthick."

"*Mr.* Trevarthick! I used to be 'Jim,'" he said passionately.

"It will be Mr. Trevarthick in future. Cannot you cease caring about me? I am not good-looking, I am growing old; I do not care for you in the slightest, and never shall. There are other girls younger, prettier, affectionate, who would marry you: think of them."

"What's the good of saying that? I have tried to think of other women, and I can't. I have cared for you all these years, and I always shall."

Damaris was silent. She was annoyed by the man's importunities, and the annoyance overcame the pity she felt she ought to have for him. She could not understand the passion; consequently, she was hard to him, and more cruel than she knew.

"You must conquer your feeling for me," she said at last, firmly. "I will not have you always following me. I am beginning to dislike you."

"I won't give you up," he said sullenly. "I mean to have you some day, say what you will."

Damaris sighed with impatience.

"I don't know why I am so mad about you. The other chaps are always laughing at me about you." He looked at her out of the corner of his eyes, hoping his words might rouse her. "You're getting old; you're not pretty, and no other man has ever looked at you, and yet—— I'd lie down and let you trample on me if you liked"—his passion bursting out again—"but you wouldn't like: you'd just walk another way. You'd be happier with me than you are at home with your step-mother. I'm better off than you'd think for, and I wouldn't cross you in anything. Damaris, can't you think of it?"

"No; I could not marry you."

"Is it because you think I know nothing?—that I don't know about books and pictures and bits of work, like Mr. Rushton? But I'd learn. I'd go up to London and have lessons and things, if you'd only say you'd have me. There! you're laughing! You think I can learn nought, but promise to marry me, and you'd see."

"I cannot promise."

The clash of church bells rang out from the wooded hill; evening service was over; the ringers were giving their Sunday evening peal.

"Other girls will look at me if you won't," said Jim at last, with sullen bitterness. "Your cousin ain't so

stand-offish as you, though she's a real beauty and a grand lady."

"The people are coming from church," said Damaris indifferently; "you had better go. We are talked about too much, and I do not wish you to be seen with me."

He caught her hands and looked into her face.

"Damaris, give me a little hope. I'll wait as long as you like if you'll give me a chance, only don't throw me over at once. I shall go to the bad if you do."

"James Trevarthick, for six years you have followed me, dogged my footsteps, given me no peace. How many times have you gone through this farce with me? Dozens, I believe; I am tired of it all. I do not care for you: I never have had one spark of affection for you. If I married you I should be utterly miserable. I have told you this before, and yet you continue to persecute me in this unmanly way. I will not have it. Do you hear? I—will—not—have—it! Don't sob in that childish fashion: go home and do your duty, and marry some nice girl, and be happy. But whether you work or do your duty, or whether—as you weakly say—you go to the bad, you shall not haunt me and make love to me in future! If you have not the manliness to leave me alone, I shall go away from Trentham."

He sprang to his feet, stung by her words.

"After that I'll go," he said, his lips quivering. "You've said quite enough; you'll be sorry for it some day."

He strode away; his slight well-knit frame held very erect, his hat a thought too jauntily cocked on one side. For half-an-hour after leaving Damaris he was desperate; he felt that it was useless to hope. But gradually crushed vanity reared its head. He had never given her the feeling of being neglected. What would she say if she found he had taken her at her word, and transferred his affections to another woman? She would find out his worth when a woman beautiful, fashionable, showed that she did not despise him, Jim Trevarthick.

Poor Jim honestly believed in his heart that he was irresistible; in time Damaris must love him. He smoked far into the night, arranging his plans.

Damaris sat long on the pier after Trevarthick had gone. Two fishermen came down to smoke their Sunday evening pipes and talk. They leant against the posts used for mooring the schooners, and discussed the gossip of the village. But they finished their pipes and went home to their suppers, and still Damaris sat looking down at the darkening water. The wooded hill grew black against the dark sky, the lights of the village crept out in the cottage windows, the crimson west faded into dusky lake, the primrose sky grew dark with the evening clouds. The lap of the water against the pier head grew louder, the wind began to rise.

Damaris shivered. She hardly knew of what she was thinking. Every Sunday she came to the pier and watched the sunset: it had grown into a habit with her. Indifferent and cold as she was to men and women, scenery awoke in her warm emotions that she would have died rather than own to. The setting of the sun in the bay had a peculiar fascination for her.

In the doctor's house Mrs. Lemarcham was telling Helen Desborough about her step-daughter and Jim Trevarthick. Helen, dressed in a loose white silk tea-gown, was stretched at full length on the green sofa, her hands behind her head. She had not yawned once during the recital.

Mrs. Lemarcham, unknown to herself, was utterly misleading Helen in her account of the relations between Damaris and Jim Trevarthick. She, like the other village women, considered Trevarthick the handsomest man in the neighbourhood, and she did not believe that her step-daughter could really be obdurate to such a "smart young fellow."

"She's huffy because he runs after other maidens a bit! I don't blame him; but Damaris, she was that scornful when she heard about the affair with Sally Smithson, she nearly snapped his nose off when he came to the house after it. My word! she was jealous!"

"I wonder they are not married."

"Married! He don't mean marrying, bless you! He's not that sort of chap. Damaris would be glad enough if he was. Ha! ha!"

Helen joined in the laugh. She had a belief that all women longed for admiration, and it never occurred to her that a plain, shabbily-dressed woman like her cousin could refuse the admiration of Jim Trevarthick. His coarse animal beauty was agreeable to her taste, for Helen's soul was vulgar. It was only outward refinement that raised her above Polly Lemarcham: in their hearts the women were alike.

"Damaris pretends that stand-offishness; it draws him on. He don't like to own himself beat, but he'll tire of it soon. I saw him looking at you in church this morning, and he never left your side after we came out."

"Who is this Mr. Rushton she goes to see?"

"He's a stuck-up lot! He just comes here for the summer, but he never sees anyone except Damaris. She's there morning, noon, and night."

"He should marry her."

"Marry her! My! why, he's seventy if he's a day, though he's spry enough. Walks miles every morning as fast as you like."

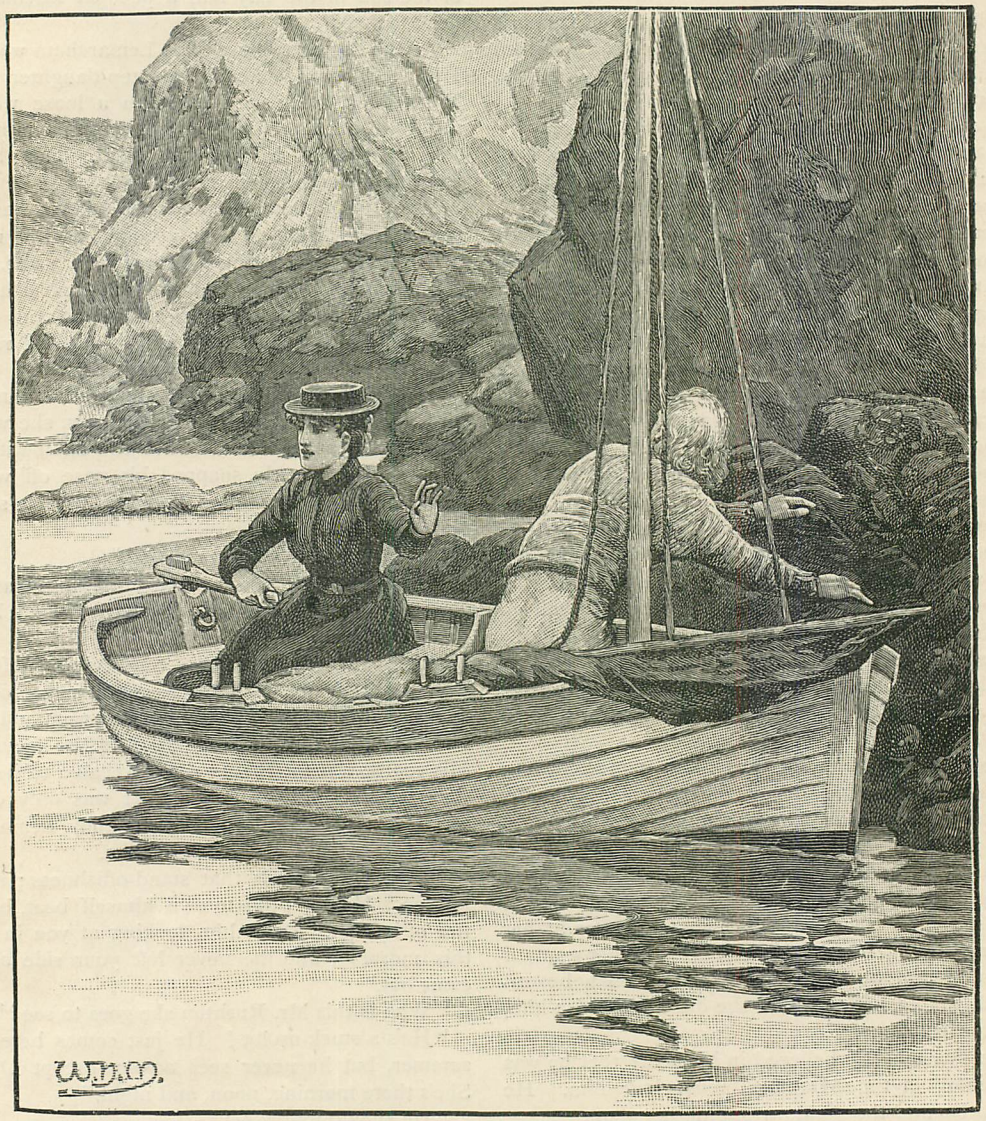
"Is he well off?"

"I should just think so! He's got millions, they say, and his house in London is something wonderful, I've heard."

"Rushton—Rushton? I seem to remember the name. I must write to Fanny Hastings, and ask her to find out for me. It might be useful."

For Helen Desborough money was the final goal. Her life had been a struggle to pay her bills. How she and her father lived in the style they had done was a mystery which the books of their tradespeople could have solved.

The lamp was lighted when Damaris entered the house. Helen looked at her with more interest than she had as yet done. How could this woman, with



"AT A SIGN FROM DAMARIS OLD SAM HELD TO THE ROCK AND WAITED" (*p.* 298).

her badly-made serge frock, her indifferent face, her absence of any feminine tricks, cope with herself, with her—Helen Desborough—an acknowledged beauty, a woman who had studied and learnt the art of dressing? who knew all manner of women's wiles, who had seen more men in a month than the other in a year! A smile of derisive pity crossed Helen's face. There would be little glory in wresting Jim Trevarthick from such a woman. Helen Desborough did not for an instant believe that Damaris would have no wish to fight for his possession.

"Jim Trevarthick has been here, Damaris," said her step-mother.

"So he told me."

"Oh! you've seen him, then?"

"He came down to the pier where I was sitting."

Helen heard, but said nothing.

On Tuesday afternoon Mr. Rushton called.

Damaris had told Helen of the visit, and that young lady was attired with more than her usual care. She literally shone in the hideous green-and-pink room like a rich jewel in a bad setting. Mr. Rushton appeared to feel the contrast. He several times looked round in disgust at the ugly walls and furniture, his eyes returning to the lovely young woman opposite him, and resting on her with a satisfied glance. She did not offend his critical taste.

And Helen was charming, with just the right amount of deference towards an old man.

"When may I have the pleasure of seeing you at

my house, Miss Desborough? Will you come with Damaris to-morrow afternoon?"

The invitation was accepted with alacrity.

The visit was paid the following day. Damaris, at home in Mr. Rushton's house, picked up a book and read, while he showed Helen the beauties of his pictures, his embroideries, his books. Helen was sharp if she was not clever, and showed a proper interest in her host's collection of art treasures. Mentally she appraised everything at its money's value, and decided that rumour was not far wrong in the size of Mr. Rushton's fortune.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

"AND GREEN AND BLUE HIS SHARP EYES TWINKLED."

"HERE'S Sam Burrowes wants to see you," called Mrs. Lemarcham to her step-daughter.

It was the morning after the dinner at Mr. Rushton's. Helen was still in bed; she never rose before twelve o'clock, and her elaborate dressing occupied the time until the early dinner.

Damaris was reading in her own room. She ran downstairs at Mrs. Lemarcham's call.

A tall, powerfully-built old man stood in the doorway. He wore a blue jersey and the sou'-wester of the Trentham fishermen. His hair hung in grizzled ringlets to his shoulders. His face was lined, and coloured a florid red by wind and rain. Light blue eyes looked out from beneath thick grey brows: eyes that had a wandering expression, and betrayed that their owner had not all his wits.

"Well, Sam, what is it?"

"Will 'ee come with me for a sail, Miss Damaris? I've got a cravin' agen, and I promised 'ee I'd come and tell 'ee."

"We will go sailing for the day."

Sam Burrowes had fits of drinking. For months he would remain steady, earning money and spending scarcely any of his earnings. The fishermen said that he buried what he saved, but he was cunning, and never gave a clue to what became of it. At the end of a period—long or short, as the case might be—Sam Burrowes would appear in his best clothes, cloth coat and trousers, and a billy-cock hat. The village knew what this meant: "Sam was on the drink," and "on the drink" he remained until his savings were exhausted. He might be seen during that season lurching from one public house to another—his battered-in hat fallen over one eye, a drunken smile upon his face.

He had no wife and children: he lived alone in a cottage that the old vicar, Damaris' grandfather, had given him. In his charge, Damaris, when a child, had gone out fishing in the bay, for Sam was trustworthy enough in his sober moments. He had begun life as servant at the vicarage, and had been trusted with the mother of Damaris, as later he was trusted with her child.

Damaris acquired a strong hold on the old man's affections. He obeyed her dictates, and for her sake fought against the craving for drink which was his curse. He had been sober for some weeks at this time, and had promised to tell Damaris when the craving came upon him again. She sometimes delayed his drunken fit by getting him upon the water for a day, away from the temptations of the village public-houses. She feared that he would never completely reform, but every day of sobriety was a gain. If she could have gained control over his money, she might have prevented the weeks of drunkenness he occasionally indulged in, but he hid from her as carefully as he hid from the village, where he placed his savings.

"You've a young wumman staying with 'ee, Miss Damaris, haven't 'ee?" he asked, when they were sailing out in the bay.

"Yes—a cousin."

"Her's a fine-lookin' maid. I saw her walkin' up to the cliffs with Trevarthick."

He looked at Damaris with an anxious expression in his watery blue eyes. The old man thought that Damaris and Jim Trevarthick were engaged. She had long given up the effort to drive into his muddled brain that she did not intend marrying Jim Trevarthick. If she did not marry Trevarthick she would be an old maid, and that was an awful fate to the mind of Trentham Cove.

"They seemed very friendly like. Her was lookin' up at 'un distractin' like, and her was dressed fine. Can't 'ee buy a dress like hers, now, Missee?"

"I am afraid I cannot, Sam."

Sam looked at her wistfully.

"You'll be left in the lurch, Missee, if 'ee don't take care. The men ain't what they used to be once: they're main backward about courtin' now, and you'm gettin' on, Miss Damaris. Your mother was married when she wasn't twenty. You may laugh, but I tell 'ee 'tis a poor wisht affair when a wumman's forced to live alone."

"It must be worse to live with a person for whom one does not care."

"I warn 'ee, Miss, you'll be left. That there cousin o' yours is a bad lot. I see it in her face. Her couldn't get over old Sam when her came down to quay, and wheedled right and left, lookin' at the men and smilin'. They was followin' her about like dogs, but I ain't so easily taken in, though I be the fool o' the village. There's more fools than them that's labelled such."

"You are hard on my cousin, Sam."

"Ugh!" he grunted.

The boat was tacking, and the management of the sails took Sam's attention for a while.

"Her's a bad lot, Miss Damaris; I hate her!" he muttered, after a time.

"Nonsense, Sam!" said Damaris: "you must not be so foolish. Here is some bread and cheese: we will have our lunch, and then we will sail to Lynscombe."

Damaris handed the old man a hunch of bread and a wedge of cheese. Sam had a voracious appetite, and he had finished the bread and cheese before she had well begun her bread and butter.

It was a hot August day, and on the sea was a dazzling glare. There was a light breeze, however, and in the afternoon the wind strengthened, and brought a refreshing coolness with it. The wind was in the right quarter for Lynscombe, and Sam soon had the boat anchored in that solitary little bay.

The rocks ran out on either side, forming a natural harbour, and a shore of smooth sand dipped into the sea. The moor stretched away upwards from the sand; the steep cliffs on either side shutting out any further view. Down the valley flowed a swift stream, bubbling and frothing over the stones in its course, until it flowed out on the yellow sand and into the sea. Half-way up the valley was a ruined mill, standing by the stream. Smoke from the chimney showed that it was inhabited. Patches of gorse and heather coloured the short turf on the steep hill-sides. Here and there the granite rock burst through the turf, and stood out against the green of the grass and purple and yellow of heather and gorse. But the scene was gloomy and desolate, seen under an August sun. What must it be on a grey, sombre day? There was something desolate about the ruined mill, a coldness about the granite rocks, a solitude about the babbling stream.

But Damaris loved the spot.

Sam hated it, or pretended to do so. He would not say why, but he always grumbled when Damaris gave the order to Lynscombe.

The heat of the day had made her thirsty, and she bade Sam fetch her a cup of water from the mill. She knew the old woman who lived there alone, and often procured milk or water from her.

The boat was anchored in the shadow of the rock, the sail furled. Sam clambered ashore to do his mistress's bidding.

In this natural harbour the gentle roll of the sea was not visible. The boat lay almost motionless on the water. Damaris leaned back in the stern, and looked idly at the scene.

Her thoughts were interrupted by Sam's return without the cup of water, and in a state of frenzy. He climbed along the rocks to the boat, and whispered hoarsely in Damaris' ear—

"Her's in the cottage with 'un, now, this instant minute, Miss Damaris!"

Before he had pushed the boat from the rocks the cottage door opened, and Helen Desborough and Jim Trevarthick stepped out.

Helen saw the boat, and that Damaris was the woman seated in the stern. Helen never lost an opportunity of triumphing over a rival; she considered her cousin a rival: if a poor one. Now she could exhibit Trevarthick led captive at her chariot wheels.

"Stop!" she called in her clear voice; "stop! I want to speak to you, Damaris."

At a sign from Damaris old Sam held to the rock and waited.

Helen stepped down across the turf and sand to the edge of the water, and Trevarthick followed with a foolish air.

"Are you going back to Trentham now?"

"Yes."

"Tell your people I shall not return until eight o'clock. Mr. Trevarthick is going to drive me to his house to have tea with his mother, and he will bring me home afterwards."

"Very well."

She said some laughing words over her shoulder to Jim Trevarthick, then raised her voice and spoke again to Damaris.

"Mr. Trevarthick is sorry he cannot ask you to come with us, but there is only room for two in the dog-cart."

Sam ground his teeth with fury.

"You will be back long before I shall. Give my message. . *Au revoir!*"

She waved her hand and turned away, followed by crestfallen Jim.

"I hate 'un! I hate 'un!" muttered Sam, as he pushed the boat from the rocks.

Damaris looked grave for some minutes after that short interview. She wished no harm to Jim Trevarthick, but she felt that harm would surely come from the notice Helen gave him. Helen meant nothing: of that Damaris was certain. She was merely fooling the vain young fellow to the top of his bent; for Damaris never imagined for a moment that Trevarthick could still care for herself. The love affairs of the village were too fleeting for her to have much faith in the unchangeableness of the gentle passion. She had never cared for any man, and it seemed quite natural to her that the man who swore he loved her on Sunday should be in love with another woman the following week. It would have been unnatural if he had not, when she was the one woman, and Helen the other.

But still she wished no harm to Jim, and she was sorry that Helen had caught him by her fascinations.

However, it was a relief that he would worry her no more with his attentions.

Sam had been earnestly watching her grave face.

"'Taint his doin'," he said at last; "her's leadin' of 'un on. Old Sam b'aint such a fool but he can see that."

Damaris shook off the thought of Trevarthick. After all, it was no business of hers; he was old enough to look after himself. She would try and convince Sam that Trevarthick's affections did not concern her.

"Mr. Trevarthick may marry whom he pleases, Sam. I do not care. I am speaking the truth: I do not care."

"Oh! you say that, Miss Damaris!" said the old man, with a shake of his head.

He could not be convinced. Damaris might say what she pleased; old Sam was not to be deceived. He shook his head, with a cunning look in his eyes and Damaris shrugged her shoulders, and gave up the attempt to convince him. But she forbade him sternly to annoy her cousin in any way.

"Now remember, Sam: I forbid you to speak to her, to touch her, to mutter when she passes you. If you

do, I will have nothing more to do with you. I will never sail with you again or give you a dinner. Remember."

Old Sam promised meekly to refrain from molesting her "fine lady cousin."

His passions were too short-lived to be dangerous, and his hatred of one day was forgotten by the next. But his dislike to Helen did not fade with time. He said no more to Damaris, but she knew that he continued to dislike her cousin.

A few days after her sail with him, old Sam put on his best clothes and had a drinking bout. This fit lasted until the money he had saved was exhausted, and having had a long period of sobriety, he had more than usual to spend. From the fit of drinking, a shattered, feeble old man emerged. His brains were completely muddled by this last phase; the only glimmers of reason were his affection for Damaris and his dislike to Helen.

But he had lost the key to the reason for his dislike. He would weep maudlin tears, and mutter that some harm would be done Miss Damaris by her "fine lady cousin." He never mentioned Trevarthick; he had forgotten the connection of ideas.

"Sam, you are to tell me where you hide your money," said Damaris to him one morning.

Her father had warned her the night before that another drinking bout would probably be fatal for Sam. He had regained his strength, was earning fairly good sums by his fishing, and Damaris knew that he did not spend half that he earned. He was hiding his savings to spend in drink. He looked at her from under his bushy eyebrows.

"You must tell me, Sam."

"Why do'ee want to know, Miss?"

"Because I do not mean you to spend your savings in drink."

He looked at her cunningly, and then began to sob and cry.

"Don't 'ee steal my earnins, Miss Damaris. Don't 'ee, don't 'ee," was all she could get from him.

She tried gentleness, anger, remonstrance. In vain; Sam kept the secret of his hiding-place.

Jim Trevarthick had become a constant visitor at the Lemarchams. His visits were far more frequent than before Helen's arrival, and Mrs. Lemarcham flattered her guest by alleging that she (Helen) was the magnet. She was mistaken. Trevarthick had not ventured to be such a constant visitor before Helen's arrival; he had been afraid of offending Damaris. But now his visits were ostensibly to Helen, and Damaris could not object. He was in a strange frame of mind. He was flattered by Helen's open partiality for him, her beauty attracted him, her eyes and smile bewildered him. He was reckless: he wanted to show Damaris that a woman like Helen would notice him: that only she spurned him from her.

He attended Helen everywhere.

Mrs. Matthews said that it was shocking, most unladylike. She met them driving together, walking together, and she believed that he was a daily visitor at Mrs. Lemarcham's house; she was glad she had not called on the young woman, as had been her first intention.

The village discussed the question. A few of the fisher-folk pitied Damaris—very few. The general opinion was that it served her right.

"'Eeve a' left her, an' I doan't wonder. Her always trated 'un as though 'ee were dirt. Now 'ee 'th a took up with a better-lookin' maid; and sarve her right, I say!" Billy Treleven's wife said; and she was the spokeswoman of village opinion.

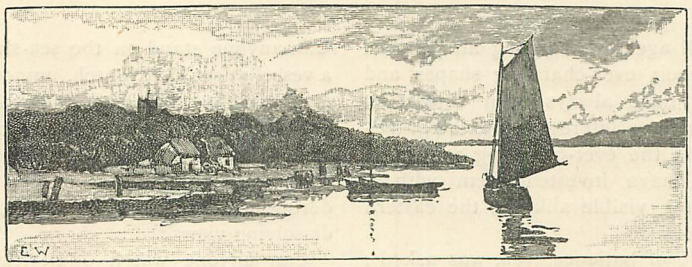
Damaris herself was ignorant of the gossip round her name. Old Sam's illness occupied her thoughts. She was little at home. Mr. Rushton had been confined to his house for some weeks with a bad attack of gout, and Damaris passed much of her time with him. She knew that Trevarthick was at her father's house daily; Helen was careful to mention the fact before her cousin.

Mr. Rushton recovered from his attack of gout, and old Sam became well enough to follow his trade of fishing. Damaris spent more time at home, and had leisure to observe what was happening.

Trevarthick's visits multiplied with the constant presence of Damaris in her home. Helen invited him to the early dinner which she pleased to call lunch, and he came; he was there at tea, at supper. He took Helen for drives, and she brought him back to spend the remainder of the day.

Damaris, as far as she troubled herself about the matter, was indignant with Helen. She was merely leading him on for amusement; when Mr. Vanburgh came she would throw poor Jim aside.

END OF CHAPTER THE FIFTH.



THE YEAR'S JEWELS.

BY M. C. GILLINGTON.

SAPPHIRE: APRIL.

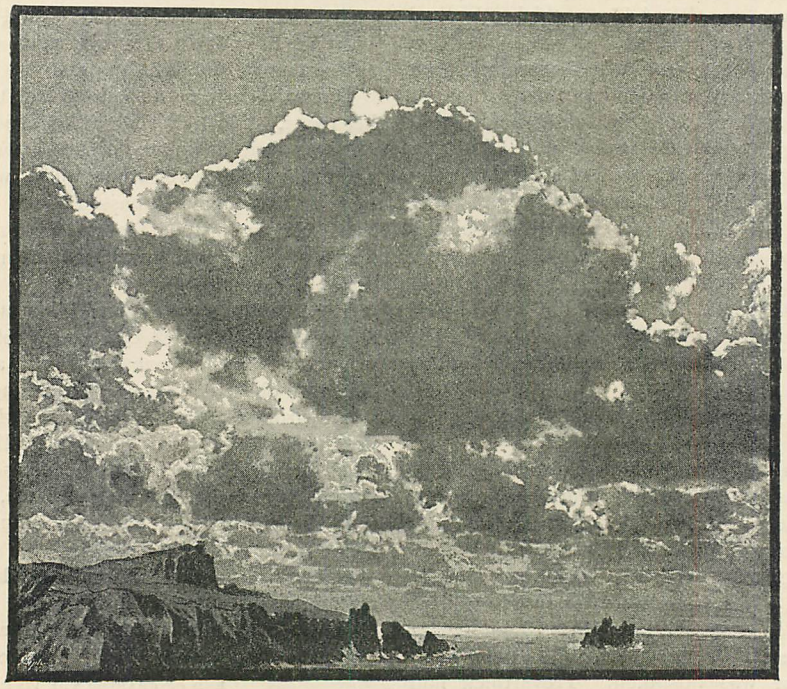
Frees from enchantment, denotes repentance.

NO, my lady's grief!
Tears a-shine in eyes of blue,
Trembling on their rim,
As the bead of diamond dew,
In an April dawning dim,
Shakes on edge of leaf.

Smile again, sweet eyes!
Let the brief and bitter shower
Pass and be forgot,
Faster than through fern and flower,
Arrowy-swift and lingering not,
The last raindrop flies.

But as yonder blue
Spread in sapphire sheen above,
Pales with sudden cloud—
By these tears I know my love
Not alone a princess proud,
But a woman too!

CLOUDLAND.



THE CUMULUS.

(*From a photograph by Mr. B. Wyles, Southport.*)

THROUGH all ages, and among all peoples, clouds, in their ever-changing shapes and movements, have always been objects of curiosity and keen interest; nay, the grandeur of their forms, and the ever-changing panorama of their movements, have invested them with a quasi-religious character, visible alike in the eastern and western mythologies.

That grand example of patience, Job, was asked: "Can *any* understand the spreadings of the clouds?" Can anyone stand on the sea-shore, or on the deck of a vessel at sea, and watch, unmoved, the piled-up and ever-changing masses of snowy *cumulus* cloud on the horizon — here assuming grotesque forms, there stretching away into illimitable vistas, as if forming approaches to the "plains of Heaven," without wondering at the mysterious character of these glorious dissolving views?

Can anyone watch uninterested the delicate and feathery forms of the *cirrhus* cloud, which every

moment changes, and assumes new beauties, apparently without an effort?

Can anyone gaze unmoved upon the dark and lowering *nimbus* as it approaches in solemn grandeur, its dark recesses lit up by fitful lightning flashes, and re-echoing the roll of distant thunder?

Can anyone watch the awful warfare of struggling clouds in the *cyclone*, when the might of Him who "maketh the clouds His chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind," is most manifestly shown in connection with the utter helplessness of man, and answer this question?

Or who, unmoved, can witness cloud phantasies like these? Did you notice the wonderful atmospheric effects that were visible at Madras last Thursday (July 18th, 1872)? I think I never saw anything more beautiful, or anything more life-like. For an hour or two the city, situated upon a flat plain, was surrounded by mountains as lofty, and scenery as grand as any that Switzerland or Scotland could boast of—some black and frowning, others snow-clad, whose

> "Rocky summits, split and rent,
> Formed turret, dome, and battlement;
> Or seemed fantastically set
> With cupola or minaret,
> With crest or pagod ever decked,
> Or mosque of Eastern architect."

Going towards this magnificent pile of cloud-mountains was like entering a pass; and, further on, the snow-clad peaks made me believe myself back in times long gone by, when, with alpenstock in hand, I crossed the Bernese Oberland, and looked up with eyes bedimmed with delight at the glorious Jungfrau.

Some years ago I was enabled, from Mussooree, to make some observations as to the height of *cumulus* and *nimbus* clouds (under ordinary circumstances) above the earth. And to explain them, let me describe the surroundings. It is one of our favourite hill stations in the great Himalaya range, on the 78th parallel of E. longitude, and due north of Agra on the Jumna.

Its mall is 6,000, and its highest peak 7,026 feet above the sea. Below it, and 2,239 feet above the sea, is the wonderful valley of the Dehra Dūn, 3,761 feet below the mall. Of this lovely valley more anon.

No locality in the world can exhibit such a diverse congeries (if I may use the expression) of views as Mussooree. Stand on the mall, and look to the south; below you lies the vast expanse of the Dūn, revelling in cultivation, and bounded by the fossiliferous rampart of the Siwálik Hills, beyond which, stretching away to the south, and melting in the purple distance, are the plains of India.

Turning to the left, you see the holy Ganges emerging from its glacier-tipped rift in the mighty Himalayas, struggling across the Dūn, and bursting through the barrier of the Siwálik Hills at the sacred shrine of Hardwár, and thence commencing its long pilgrimage seawards.

Just below Hardwár its right bank is tapped by the huge Ganges Canal, a river in itself, 654 miles long, rejoining the parent stream at Cawnpur, after giving off 3,078 miles of distributaries. We distinctly see the canal, and Roorki, the headquarters of the Royal Engineers, with its enormous workshops on the left bank; and above it we see the canal carried across the Soláni river by an immense aqueduct.

Turning to our right, we see the Jumna, glacier-

THE CIRRHUS.

(From a photograph by Mr. B. Wyles, Southport.)

THE NIMBUS.
(*From a photograph by Mr. B. Wyles, Southport.*)

born like the Ganges, passing across the Dūn, through the Siwáliks, and flowing away Delhiwards, to join the Ganges at Allahabad.

Let us climb one of the hill-tops above the mall, and, looking northwards, what a sight meets our enraptured gaze ! Snow-clad peak on peak stretching away to the N.W. and S.E., and lost in the shimmering haze of their own exhalations ; all giants,* varying from 24,000 to 26,000 feet in height ; but the Titans, Kinchinjunga and Mount Everest, respectively 28,178 and 29,000 feet in height, are too far S.E. to be seen.

We can now revert to the subject of this paper, bearing in mind that the mall is 3,761 feet above the Dūn level. On two occasions I witnessed from it the following interesting sight. Below me stretched a vast expanse, as of purest flocculated cotton-wool, entirely obscuring the plain of the Dūn ; above me, the pure cerulean. My sky was clear, that of the valley below was obscured by cumulo-stratus.

Aware of the chance that I now had, I looked about for landmarks whereby to measure the height, above the Dūn, of the stratum, and caught sight of a house, 500 feet below me, which was just touched by the woolly expanse, and, therefore, enveloped in fog.

The figures now were clear enough ; I was 6,000 feet and the valley below me was 2,239 feet above the sea level, or 3,761 feet below me. But the strato-cumulus was, as regards its upper surface, 500 feet below me, and, therefore, 3,261 feet above the Dūn valley. But its thickness I could not estimate having no landmarks.

* When I returned to Scotland in 1878 I took my wife on a trip to the Highlands, and, steaming up Loch Lomond, I looked in vain for the Ben, and asking for its whereabouts, was told : "Eh, mon, yon's it afore ye !" I was abashed at this comparative hillock being the mountain I had climbed with such emulation as a boy.

On another occasion, in the Rains, I was watching the ever-changing panorama of the Dūn, and caught sight of three thunderstorms slowly passing up the valley from the S.E. (my left), and, apparently, two or three miles, perhaps more, apart. As they came up abreast of me it was most interesting to watch the warfare of these storm-clouds. The dark nimbus was triangular, the apex downwards, shading off into the vertical lines indicating rain, and illuminated now and then by lightning flashes.

The three storms were most business-like in their movements and actions, each seeming to assert its own dignity and importance ; and I watched them with interest and amusement, for while I was in sunshine and under a cloudless sky, each village over which each nimbus passed had its "heaven black with clouds and wind and great rain."

The most remarkable fact regarding these vagrant nimbi was the constant fire of their artillery. One would fancy that their electric strength would have been exhausted soon after they left the far south-east where I first detected them ; but, on the contrary, they acquired strength as they proceeded.

Now about the height of these nimbus clouds above the Dūn. As stated above, I was watching them from an elevation of 3,761 feet above the valley, which is bounded to the south by the Siwálik Hills rising to a height of 1,500 to 2,000 feet above the plain. I caught them passing a 1,500 feet peak, and they were below my line of vision (3,261 feet above the Dūn), say, 300 feet roughly, then each nimbus would be, say, 1,200 above the Dūn, the cumulo-stratus being 3,261.

The *average* altitude, therefore, of both phenomena would be 2,230 feet above the Dūn, or 4,469 feet above the sea.

R. F. H.

SPRING-TIDE AT HOLLYBUSH MANOR.

BY AN AMATEUR GARDENER.

APRIL had come again at last, and, at all events around the neighbourhood of Dunchester, winter seemed now to be a thing of the past. The tennis lawn was being rolled at Hollybush; the cuckoo had come, and the nightingale had followed soon afterwards; while in every corner of the garden, Bailey, the gardener, under the watchful and superintending care of Mr. Singleton, was making active preparations for the summer campaign.

Meantime, something must be said about the young folks at the Manor. The unhappy scars had well-nigh faded away on the face of poor Edith Merriman, although one or two marks still caused her a little anxiety; for quite recently, when happening to accompany Amy and Mr. Singleton on the occasion of their calling about Easter time at the Deanery as they passed through Dunchester, the good old Dean, hardly knowing why he asked the question, most innocently inquired whether "that little mark on her chin was caused by a burn," and amiably suggested a remedy. The question, however, was quite enough to cause a veritable burn in the cheek of poor Edith, while that of Amy also caught fire in gentle sympathy with her friend, when happily Mr. Singleton came abruptly to the rescue with a judicious question about hyacinths, which occasioned a general movement towards a noble bow-window that overlooked the garden, and which was almost as quickly followed up by an adjournment to the outside. The soil all round Dunchester was wonderfully prolific, and indeed—to quote a favourite observation of Bailey, the horticultural sage —"pretty nigh anything would grow if you just stuck it in the ground."

Mr. Singleton always enjoyed a visit to the Deanery, for the garden there was noble in its proportions, while results amply compensated for all the care that was bestowed upon it. Now, although there was nothing in the way of horticulture that "good Mr. Dean," as he was called, was really able to communicate to Mr. Singleton which the old Hollybush squire did not already know, yet the latter much appreciated the quiet monosyllabic and quasi-authoritative way in which the Dean was wont to expatiate about his flowers as he went—what Nelly Singleton described as "toddling round the beds." On these occasions Mr. Singleton was wont to follow slowly behind the Dean, a quiet smile of approval always lighting up his face as the garden homily fell upon his attentive ear.

"Mr. Dean" was of the purple and somewhat plethoric order, and now and then would suddenly turn round and confront Mr. Singleton, hoping thereby to emphasize some little gardening theory that he had advanced by button-holing him and bringing his hearer to a dead stand. "Yes, yes," continued the Dean: "although I am an old man, Mr. Singleton, I take a great pleasure in my garden." Then turning with all the politeness of the old school to the young ladies, he added—"I fear I have been running on too long, so you must forgive me." Nor perhaps was Edith Merriman very sorry, as she told Nelly on her return home, that at this point a wheezy fit of coughing nearly transformed the good Dean into a beet-root.

Many gardening matters, however, which had been discussed, Mr. Singleton had already determined to talk over again with Bailey and the boys, when presently the mellow chimes from one of the grey old towers of the cathedral that was hard by dreamily announced the fact that it was a quarter to four, but in such tardy and saddened strains, which seemed to say, "Really, I've been singing the quarters for upwards of five hundred years, and I do not think I can go on much longer."

The chimes were followed by the comparative tinkling of a smaller bell from another tower, which the Singletons knew to be for the four o'clock service, so that in five minutes more they hurried away as the Dean was also looking at his watch. And as they walked round the Close to meet the carriage, already they heard the thunder of the open diapason within the cathedral, which signified that the white-robed, with Mr. Dean in their rear, were already filing into their places.

And as for the other youthful members of the Hollybush household, Tom and George Singleton had during the past winter months made rapid progress under Mr. Haredale; but as old Mr. Singleton had again ascertained that young Charles Merriman was given to the study of horticulture under the supposed guidance of Dobbin, the cottager, he had thought it best to suggest to Major Merriman by letter that Master Charles should, in the course of a week or two, be transferred to the care of his father, Mr. Singleton conjecturing that one of the ushers in the school of horticulture, who had been nominated to that post by Mr. Charles, was none other than the guileless Alice Dobbin herself. And a tutor in her position, with eyes so bright, was out of the question. Yes, Charles had better go.

If anything, the garden of the ever popular old Dean of Dunchester was in some respects a trifle more advanced this season than that of the Singletons. But the hyacinth show in both gardens this spring was certainly a fine one, and this is what in October last Bailey had done by way of preparation. Twenty rows of bulbs had been put in, there being seven in a row, consisting of light and dark red, light and dark blue,

and white, arranged consecutively, and, of course, with due regard to their colour. "But an important item in making up a hyacinth bed is," said Mr. Singleton, "that care be had when purchasing or putting in the bulbs that all are so selected as to *bloom* at the same time, as often quite three weeks' difference exists between the time of blooming of those known as early and the late ones. And the same discretion should be used with regard to tulips, whose bloom follows quickly upon that of hyacinths; and indeed many of each class we know are in bloom at one and the same time."

April weather, however, being proverbially fickle and changeable, Bailey was one morning eager for a little help among what he called his "bulby show." For the heads of bloom both of tulips and hyacinths were in noble order, but a sharp shower on the previous day, and a fitful-looking sky, with occasional gusts, on the morning of poor Bailey's appeal for help, had almost frightened him out of his life.

"Mas'r George," said he, "could you and Mr. Tom help me this morning to tie up my hyacinths? The blooms is so fine and heavy that one more of these here April showers or hail will make April fools of us all if it breaks off the blooms; and after all the pains we've been at, it would be a thousand pities to have 'em all spoilt."

Each head of bloom was after this as quickly as possible secured to a little stake, and where the flower was unusually heavy it was secured in two places, to ensure it the more readily against being cut down by an April squall.

"But, lor! Mr. Tom," continued Bailey, "you mustn't drive your stake far down enough to bruise or injure the bulb below; see what you're a-doing of, sir." And Bailey was only just in time to prevent further mischief from being done.

"BAILEY WAS ONLY JUST IN TIME."

And though the Dobbin school of horticulture had not perhaps of late been quite so popular with young Charles Merriman, yet Mr. Singleton was still more concerned to notice that the young gentleman's mirthful attentions had undeniably somewhat overbalanced the head of his thoughtless niece, Nellie. Charlie Merriman was going in a fortnight, and he was evidently making the most of his opportunity; and indeed, but that Mr. Singleton did not wish to wound his old friend the Major, the young gentleman would have been more summarily disposed of. Or why could not he send Nellie off on a visit? Would dear old Dean Bodley and his sister have her for a fortnight? Of course they would; but no: perhaps he himself and his good Amy could for the time being more thoroughly look after her, and thus avoid the more easily all rustic chatterboxing. Altogether, the

old gentleman was a good deal worried, for to consent to anything like an engagement for either of his dear nieces with such a harum-scarum idler as Charles Merriman was out of the question altogether. So—happy thought!—he would make her work in the garden by his side as often as possible just now. Dear old Mr. Singleton! The innocency of the garden was to him a refuge at many times.

"Now, Nellie, my child, come and help me this morning cut back some roses, as I want to retard the bloom of a few of them, and they must be cut back, as you know, to two eyes. Here, I will do some with you."

"Two eyes!" Yes, and there were the two mischievous eyes of Charles Merriman not far off as he spoke. But the old gentleman had his way, for he felt that he was not then to be trifled with; and so it came about that Charlie Merriman went off with a whistle, and thought it wisest for the time being to go for a sharp constitutional with Tom and George.

INFLUENZA—AND AFTER.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.

INFLUENZA, or "the complaint," first came to England in the year 1510. To the reign of Henry VIII., then, we owe this among other blessings. It is an older family heir-loom than the potato, and the Reformation. The latter fact is, we believe, without theological significance. But that the appearance of the complaint should have coincided with the decadence of Papal power in this country has not received any polemical application, is perhaps surprising. A certain class of doctrinaire seems to have missed a congenial opportunity. That the very great widower had it, is improbable. At any rate he must have had it very lightly and forgotten it, otherwise, in later days, when beheading became a habit as inveterate in him as snuff-taking in old time blue-stockings, he would have made it an excuse for beheading some body. We know that he accused Wolsey of giving him one disease by breathing on him; that disease was not influenza. If he had known its grip personally, he would have recognised its value as a plea for execution, as it is very catching. But the epidemic long preceded the days of Henry's greatest theological feats. It came long before the days when the great unmarrier applied the doctrine of development to the question of matrimonial obligations, with results that have rendered his name a household word.

"The Complaint" of David Lindsay belongs to the same reign. But the complaint of David Lindsay was not what is now known by that name. It was not influenza, it was a poem written to say he was hard up. Lindsay was cured by King James with a knighthood and a salary; but the disease is common still.

Influenza, then, is a very old disease, and we have had many epidemics in England. The last was in 1847; and as we have enjoyed such a long immunity we have had a severe epidemic. However, we hope 1892 will see the last of it, for one attack protects generally against another, and the susceptible people who are to form the soil for the fungus to grow, must be getting scarce. With the influenza, it is to be hoped, will disappear the noxious practice of taking powerful drugs as "preventives."

The best preventive, depend upon it, is to avoid infection and to keep yourself in good health. If each case could have been isolated, the epidemic would probably have been comparatively trifling. The things to avoid are those which depress the system: late hours, irregular meals, worry, and overwork, and fatigue. Avoid chills and taking cold, and dress warmly. These precautions are extremely important to all, and increase in importance for persons over forty, especially those over sixty.

Such a state of siege is irksome, but you can revenge yourself when you are quite certain that the epidemic is over. Take a lesson from the cautious Scot who was afraid to die before he had forgiven his enemy with whom he had a long feud. He sent for this person, stated his conviction that he was dying, and formally forgave him. "But remember," said he, "if I should recover, things must go on just as before."

People who have got the influenza should go to bed at once, and send for a doctor without delay.

The period of convalescence from influenza is full of pitfalls, and is often very prolonged. Relapses in cases which at first seemed very slight are extremely common, and very often dangerous. Many of the fatal cases have been due to early neglect, and the only plan is to see a doctor, and remain under him till quite well, however slight the attack may seem at first.

This prolonged convalescence—the patient continuing weak, short breathed, pale, and bloodless, liable to recurrent pains in the limbs and back, suffering from neuralgia, want of energy, indigestion, and perpetual colds—is a very disheartening feature of the disease. But it *is* a feature of the disease, and should be recognised as such.

The causes that predispose towards this tedious invalid state, are making too light of the disease at first; not remaining long enough in bed; neglecting to get change of air after the attack; want of treatment by tonics, and other remedies appropriate to the individual, and finally getting back to business, and resuming the ordinary occupations or pleasures of life before the patient is fit for it. The state is full of dangers. The patient is an easy prey to a severe cold, which may end in inflammation of the lungs and carry him off.

Neglect of this stage in the attempt to "shake it off" is a fruitful source of even fatal illness. Yet almost all persons who take proper care of themselves recover.

To give advice suitable to all cases, is clearly impossible. In the convalescent stage it is the individual patient with all his peculiarities, hereditary and acquired, that has to be treated ; not the disease which has passed away. This can only be done satisfactorily by his own family doctor. Still a few words of general advice may be of service in helping people to recover from influenza.

In the first place do not put any faith in a certain cure or specific. No two cases of influenza are alike, and each has to be treated on its own peculiarities, and those of its unfortunate owner. There is no one drug for influenza. Take any three cases of influenza. A time may arrive when one of these may present chiefly the characters of a convalescent from severe bronchitis; a second, those of a troublesome and painful case of indigestion ; while the third may show itself as a profound and intractable nervous depression. To treat these with one drug would be as rational as if a doctor were to tell his surgery boy that it did not matter which patient got any particular bottle of medicine provided they got one all round. This would be little less absurd than the conduct of that guileless sea captain who had his remedies numbered—*e.g.*, number seven for bronchitis ; but, finding himself out of number seven, mixed numbers four and three, under the belief that as the numbers when added together made seven, so the remedy for the toothache when added to that for chilblains would be of great service in bronchitis.

In giving advice concerning the management of ourselves during convalescence from influenza, it is necessary that the reader should have a clear conception of the malady. Influenza is a disease due to a particular fungus entering our bodies, and growing there just as in scarlet and other fevers. Now the germ, fungus, microbe, or whatever name you choose to christen it, or stand godfather to, in influenza, has a very distinct preference in the matter of its headquarters. It prefers the top of the spinal marrow just where it joins the brain. Now this is a most important part of the body. It is the head office which regulates digestion, breathing, and the action of the heart. It is as if the vile creature tried to poison and starve, to strangle and stab you to the heart at the same time. It is the part butchers aim at in pithing. It is the part which occupied much of the attention of that benevolent gentleman, the late lamented Mr. Marwood, in his efforts to facilitate and render painless the exit from an unappreciative world of those persons who had been too servile imitators of Henry in his matrimonial views, or who had replied by a revolver shot to a policeman, who was at the pains to remind them that the house they were making themselves so much at home in, belonged to someone else. The fact that these burglars, the influenza germs, select such an important part of the nervous system, fully explains the want of *morale*, the terrible weakness and trembling of the limbs, the neuralgias, the confusion of mind, the loss of memory which so commonly follows the complaint. The regulative influence of this nervous centre over heart, lungs, and digestion, explain the feeble pulse, the long-continued breathlessness, the persistent distaste for food, and the painful indigestion.

Now to combat all these, there is no doubt that it is most important not to try to shake it off, but to rest. Even if you are supposed to have returned to your work, lie down whenever you feel the weariness ; if you can, go to bed early, and let your hours in bed be prolonged ; then your strength will gradually return. Do not try to walk it off ; it is very dangerous to play with damaged nervous centres, and you may lay the foundation of insidious disease.

Change of air, like rest, is also very important, and generally a rather bracing atmosphere is best, but no rule can be given. Many of the patients are really convalescent cases of bronchitis, and must be advised as such. Almost all types of influenza convalescents are extremely sensitive to the slightest draught. Still change of air with its change of scene, absence of business, and rest are most important, and may be resorted to a second time with benefit, if the convalescence lags.

Gentle exercise in the open air, short of fatigue, warm clothing, and avoiding chills and colds—these are directions which apply to all. And all require a supporting line of treatment.

Drugs are generally required in convalescence, but they must be given according to the case. Iron and quinine in large does often upset some stomachs, and yet may be beneficial in other persons. Cod liver oil may be useful in some, and would make others ill, and so on. Your own doctor is the only proper guide. There is no specific, and all depressing drugs are bad.

Diet is a question most difficult to advise on in a general way. Often, there remains great distaste for food, and painful indigestion ; yet the patient is in a state which requires support. The proper course is not to give in to the patient's distaste for food, but to find a variety of easily digestible and nourishing foods, and to give little at a time but often. The patient is not only suffering from indigestion, but also nervous prostration. If he has a good digestion, we are tempted to feed him up with fish, fats, and other things, which are so good in some cases of nervous prostration. But after the influenza, the stomach will often not stand this proceeding, so we must persevere with small quantities, often repeated, of things unirritating to the stomach, and yet nourishing, together with appropriate drugs till his system is restored to such a state that it can make sufficient gastric juice to digest the food thoroughly, making plenty of blood to nourish his exhausted nervous centres, and then will disappear the tremors, the neuralgia, sleeplessness, weakness, and confusion of mind, showing once more that pain is the prayer of the nerve for healthy blood ; but our motto must be *Festina lente*, or the most haste, the least speed towards perfect recovery.

THE ROMANCE OF A POOR YOUNG WOMAN.

BY GEORGE B. BURGIN.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

GRETCHEN stood beneath the porch gazing into the twilight. There was a porch, but there were no blossoming roses to reveal possibilities of the beautiful in grimy Belmour Gardens West, Camberwell. People always preferred the addition of "West." If there ever had been any Belmour Gardens East, they had gradually vanished. Potentates of Belmour Gardens believed in them, with a belief which was pathetic in its credulity. To sneering outsiders they were a very Sahara of dirty discomfort, organ-grinders and orange sellers, cats, and cab mews: in short, a wilderness of weary men and women, driven by poverty into their dull seclusion and squalor.

Gretchen gazed after the form going down the Gardens. It was that of her lover—a lover who had just laid his love at her feet. What a fairy-like, beautiful, and perfect world! The twilight was tinged with crimson and gold. Little shifting lights shot across the sky. These shifting lights seemed to Gretchen, Love's gossamers bound by fanciful aërial sprites to the stars, so that she and her love should be lifted from earth by those filmy bonds. A romantic reverie, truly, but Gretchen was romantic.

Gretchen put up her hands to the stars as they appeared one by one. They spoke to her; they showered down golden light: golden tears men called them of old, but they did not weep now: they shone solemnly down, and the dewy benison of the night serenely enfolded her.

"Gretchen! Gretchen!"

"Coming, papa;" and she vanished inside, to attend to the frequent wants of her querulous parent.

"I notice," said the professor, as he toyed with a 'proof,' "I notice a tendency to day-dreams in you, Gretchen. You are oblivious of your responsibilities. You do not properly realise the privilege of waiting on ME." He pronounced the last word in capital letters, as if it were indeed a privilege for which she could never be too devoutly thankful.

"I am sorry, papa," Gretchen said meekly, "but——"

"But," said the professor testily. "But me no buts. I noticed on the part of your late lamented mother the same deplorable tendency [Gretchen could not divine whether he alluded to "butting" or to day-dreams]. A most inconsistent woman. Only one more 'proof' for her to correct of my 'Butterflies of Greater Britain,' and she—died! I—I had to do it myself—the 'proof,' I mean."

"It was thoughtless of her, papa," said Gretchen, with the first faint touch of sarcasm she had ever allowed herself. "But it might have been worse for the book had you died."

"Yes," said the professor, complacently wrapping his dressing-gown around him; "it was, to say the least, inconsiderate; but we will allow bygones to be bygones, and drop the subject. Sometimes, Gretchen, you remind me of your mother. If," he continued, "I might so far unbend as to make a combined topographical and entomological simile, I should say, Gretchen, that you were—a—ahem—a 'Camberwell beauty.'"

Gretchen did not laugh. She had been brought up on that feeble professional jokelet.

The professor regarded her more severely. "Your sex," he said, in injured tones, "evinces a most deplorable lack of humour. There never was a great female musician, and there never will be a woman with any perception of humour."

"George Eliot?" fearlessly suggested Gretchen.

The professor frowned. "Because she created a clacking puppet on patterns called Poyser?" he said. "No, Gretchen. What were you doing out there?"

Gretchen came gently up to her father, and laid her little hand on his sleeve. "Daddy, dear," she said, with a suspicious choke in her voice, "don't be harsh with me to-night. Not to-night, of all nights, Dad. Something—something has happened to me."

The professor stared aghast. "Don't say there's anything wrong with my supper, or that you've been robbed," he pleaded. "Don't say that, Gretchen. Is the supper safe?"

Gretchen smiled; and laughter struggled with tears in her pretty blue eyes. The tears passed away as she looked shyly up at her father.

The professor seemed vexed. "I remember," he said testily, "that when your mother irritated me she wore that kind of expression. Don't. Take it off."

"Very well, papa." Gretchen sat down, waiting to be questioned.

"Where were we? Oh, I know. I asked why you were so long at the door. That reminds me, Gretchen. Arnold White waylaid me yesterday with some romantic nonsense about being in love with you. How old are you, child?"

"Eighteen, papa."

"Old enough to know better. I wasn't in love at that age. What did he say?"

"He has been to me with the same n—nonsense, papa," a little protesting quiver in her voice.

"Then," said the professor, taking up another 'proof,' "I may consider the—the episode ended?" He said this as if his beautiful fair-haired daughter were an insect whose sensations and emotions had to be classified—an insect belonging to the genus mutable.

"I think not, papa, if you don't mind," said Gretchen softly.

"Eh? What? But I do mind," snarled the professor. "What's to become of me?"

He flung a bundle of papers from the table, and looked fiercely at Gretchen. Then he drew his old

dressing-gown more closely around him. He gave a preliminary cough. Gretchen drew closer, so that the storm might pass over her head.

"The world," said the professor, "thinks that I'm a selfish man because I don't spoil you. The world, as usual, is wrong. But that is a detail. In spite of all its experience, the world generally is wrong. Here am I, Alaric Potts, professor. I confer an inestimable benefit on the world by my entomological researches; and the world doesn't recognise the fact, doesn't even afford it such slight recognition as is implied by a small annual gratuity from the Pension List. Ground down by age, crushed by poverty, I struggle on with the colossal book which is to abase the world in dust and ashes. Mark you, I will not complain. It has been your wondrous privilege to assist in this great work. In the monument which posterity will apologetically rear to me (unfortunately I shall not be in a position to decline their apology), you will probably be depicted sitting at my feet clad in the uncomfortable but picturesque and cold-producing garb of ancient Greece—that is, if you keep your hand to the plough. I struggle against overwhelming odds."

Gretchen put her hand in his.

"I struggle against overwhelming odds," continued the professor, utterly unmindful of her deprecatory caress, "and the great work draws near to completion. You are exceedingly useful to me. One evening, a nervous young man—at least his English is nervous—clad in a many-coloured garment which the slang of the day not inappropriately terms a 'blazer,' asks for the pleasure of a few minutes' conversation with me. I was not aware that we owed him anything, or that there could be any pleasure to me in conversing with him. I accord the few minutes' conversation. Then he—he blazes! He makes a sentimental statement that he long has loved you from afar, or—or words to that effect. He also throws in a gratuitous rhapsody about your beauty (your mother's family are very plain) —your—your dutiful self-sacrifice."

"Yes, papa?"

"I said that your destinies were bound up in the great work, and that you could not leave me."

"And what did Arnold say?"

The professor drew his dressing-gown more closely around him.

"He said that—Oh, it's monstrous!"

"Never mind, papa. Please tell me."

"He said that they would have to be unbound; that you weren't a book or a magazine; and that he would not see your life sacrificed to my—my selfishness, my vanity, my conceit! He further stated that love was of more importance than any chuckle-headed (he said that) collection of butterflies; and that he had the honour to ask me for my daughter's hand. I was wasting your life, I had killed your mother, and so on. He implied that I was a mummy, with no human feeling. He would doubtless have called me an 'Arabian Nights' ghoul, only he knows I don't like rice. I rejoined that he was at liberty to marry you if he could support you, but that I could not contribute to the expense of your trousseau; that it was my duty to afford myself all the luxuries I could in order to keep up to my work. He said——"

"Yes, papa?"

"He said that even if you came to him empty-handed you would be the sweetest boon ('sweetest boon' was the extravagant expression) God could give him. In short, I so far forgot my wounded feelings as to allow him to broach the subject to you. He wants to marry you in a year. I think he got most of the pleasure out of the conversation. Have you sent him about his business?"

"N—no, papa."

The professor was plainly grieved—grieved and hurt. "So be it," he said. "May you never in after life awake with a pang to remember how much I suffer from badly-prepared coffee; may you never experience regret and—and remorse when something recalls to your recollection the fact that I have trained you to prepare dishes contrived with a view to the promotion of my studies; may you"—and he almost wept—"may you never be conscious of the pain occasioned by opportunities wilfully thrown away and—and wasted. I have no more to say on the subject, save that the statue of myself will lack your presence. Is supper ready? Let us change the subject. Nature must be sustained."

But Gretchen did not change the subject. "Listen to me, papa," she urged. "Please listen."

"My child!"—the professor swept her into his embrace—"you relent?"

"No, papa," said Gretchen firmly.

The professor relaxed his hold, and, with a significant gesture, cast her forth into outer darkness.

"I am only human, papa. Butterflies have robbed me of your love. Arnold loves me. He says I am more interesting than a thousand butterflies."

"Such a statement—*is* my supper ready?"— said the professor—"is only another illustration of the mournful ignorance of the masses. What does he know about butterflies?"

"A great deal, papa."

"We will consider this conversation ended," said the professor. "Nothing is so injurious to digestion as recrimination. You have chosen your path. You might have climbed Fame's topmost pinnacle with me. Instead of which" (the professor was quite unconscious of plagiarism), "you go about falling in love. Were it not inconsistent with my professorial dignity, I could weep. But I have always been an indulgent parent. Love—be married—but never more be child of my old age. Let us close this—this regrettable discussion. There was a poet of my youth who, I am given to understand (I never read his trash myself), had only to place his affections on a dear gazelle (I should have thought that a gazelle was a deer) for the eccentric animal in question to do something extraordinary and disappointing. I sympathise with him—the poet, not the gazelle. What have we for supper?"

Gretchen sighed. In this crisis of her life she had experienced so little help, such slight encouragement. But the professor evidently considered himself ex-

"HE HAD ACTUALLY PREPARED IT HIMSELF" (*p.* 311).

tremely ill-used; and he was very selfish. That monumental work of his never would be finished; it was the standing joke of what the professor called a "ribald press." All his days he had been greedy and self-indulgent. The poor motherless child had no one to help her, no one to guide, no one to sustain her. And yet, this great, sweet, wonderful world of love had opened to her sorrowing eyes and brightened her whole existence. How strangely sweet and sweetly strange it was! All the little cares and vexations of life had stolen away at Love's coming; all the dulness, all the squalor almost, of her surroundings ceased to exist in the face of the wonderful fact that Arnold White loved her. No knight was he, in dazzling armour and waving plumes; no conquering hero, lance in hand, and mounted on a prancing steed; no errant minstrel he, with golden harp and golden tongue wherewith to sound her praises. He was a City clerk, and yet, to Gretchen's enraptured idea, his pen was a lance. With it he transfixed the dragon of poverty. At its magic thrust, away crumbled the walls of the Castle of Solitude, and in their place uprose a flower-decked cottage, sweet with trailing honeysuckle, and around the porch of which blossomed pure white lilies. But she could not go to her knight empty-handed, and yet the professor would not help her. In a year Arnold would claim her. If the professor relented, he should have a room within this flowery cot where he could sit and dream the hours away or invent strange dishes. The

professor had really mistaken his vocation; he knew a great deal more about basting than butterflies. From time to time Gretchen had collected all his recipes; the professor regarded them as sacred. Butterflies were for the world; dinner his own daily guerdon.

The professor's appetite was not in the least diminished by the news of his daughter's engagement. He ate a hearty supper, and, like Oliver Twist, asked for more.

Supper over, Gretchen went up to her little room, and was once more face to face with the stars. The decayed tenor outside the corner public-house sang "Only to see her Face again." His voice was rough and ragged, drink-frayed at the edges; but the man had a soul, and the yearning pain of a soul fallen from high ideals filled the air with strange pathos.

Gretchen, moved almost to tears, closed the window, and knelt by her little bed with prayer-clasped hands. A great peace stole into her heart, and filled it. She could not sleep immediately. Some half-forgotten lines came back to her:—

"Such calm is in my soul to-night, and all my life so dreamlike seems,
I have no wish to sleep, for, quite awake, I dream the strangest dreams."

For an hour she sat thus, with parted lips and shining eyes; then she slept.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

WITH the coming of winter also came discouragement to Gretchen. The professor was inexorable; he would not promise Gretchen any money for her trousseau. In the first place, he did not intend to give up one of his customary luxuries, and, in the second, he had been speculating unwisely with his own scanty funds. It seemed a dreadful thing to Gretchen that she should go to her lover in as forlorn a condition as Cinderella before the ball. It wasn't the things that she cared so much about, but hidden away in her heart there was a sentimental regret that she must be married in a plain travelling dress, lacking those scenic accessories without which no well-regulated marriage is supposed to be complete. It hurt her. She didn't quite know how to express her thoughts. Somehow, in the girl's pure heart was a feeling that her marriage meant translation to a happier sphere, after years of patient self-denial and unwearying waiting on the professor. From out the dull and murky by-ways of Belmour Gardens West, Love had come to lift her into a world of happiness so sweet that she felt she should not enter it in the common garb of every-day life. Marriage meant so much. And that she should lack all these outward symbols of her new life was very bitter. God had given love to her as the crowning reward of a lonely and laborious life. It seemed ungrateful to enter that new life like poor little Cinderella creeping away from the ball. To be married in mean attire hurt her to the very soul. But she felt that she could not adequately explain all this to her father; he would not have understood it. And as for her lover—no, she could not tell him. It was too bitter a subject to broach.

Then came the reaction caused by all this worry. Gretchen fell ill. At first she did not notice how thin and pale her cheeks had become. Little daily tasks grew beyond her strength. She could not eat; she found herself crying without any ostensible reason. She was very happy and—profoundly miserable.

One December afternoon, the professor entered the little dining-room, to find Gretchen stretched on the floor in a dead faint. It awoke new ideas in the professor's mind. "Bless me! what's the mattter with the girl?" he muttered, with unaccustomed tenderness, as he lifted her slight form on the sofa, and let his spectacles drop at the back of it. He fumbled about her, and rushed away into the kitchen. He came back with a big burning roll of brown paper and a saucer of vinegar, and stood looking at Gretchen in uncouth perplexity.

"Dear me!" he muttered, "what is the correct thing to do? I seem to have a vague idea that you dip one in the other and serve up hot. If you put the paper in the vinegar it goes out, so what's the use of lighting it? Perhaps she'd better drink it without the added flavour of brown paper."

Fortunately for Gretchen, she was not compelled to drink the vinegar. She heaved a little sigh, and the professor wildly waved brown paper under her nose until she began to cough and sneeze and sit up. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You—you won't catch fire. I can soon put you out if you do. Smell this. It isn't pleasant, but I believe it's the correct thing to smell something inexpressibly nasty under the circumstances."

Poor Gretchen faintly motioned it away, and then nearly broke a blood-vessel with her coughing.

"Try a little vinegar," anxiously suggested the professor; "try a little vinegar. I don't think much of it as a—as a beverage myself, although some cheap claret is very like it, but it may do you good." He quite forgot his usual selfishness, and bustled about her with a great deal of anxiety.

"There, there," he said presently, when Gretchen's cough had subsided; "there, there, that's right! You should eat—keep your strength up. I'll make you some of my buttered toast—toast fit for an empress. That'll pull you through. Or a muffin—a muffin *à la* Alaric Potts. You won't say no to a muffin, my child?"

Gretchen declined the muffin *à la* Potts. This increased the professor's anxiety. He remembered that Gretchen's appetite had been very capricious lately.

"You—you—you, bless my life! girl, you don't eat," he said. "Of course you—you—you can't expect to be well if you don't eat. Look at me. Nothing but the way I eat enables me to keep up to my work."

Gretchen stretched out her hand, and the professor, with a pang of remorse, bent over and kissed her.

"It—it's good to have you kind to me again, Daddy," she murmured dreamily.

A sudden pain shot through the professor's heart as he penitently shook the antennæ-like locks on his

forehead. The girl was very like her mother before the butterflies and the professor together had crushed the life out of her. What if she should go her journey of all days, and leave the professor no one to grumble at? The professor's spectacles grew moist. He wiped them carefully and put them back in his pocket. After his first surprise was over, he had dived for them underneath the sofa. Women were such irrational beings; they couldn't reason—except at Girton; they could only love and put up with ill-usage, or escape from it by death. By death? The professor remembered when, long years ago, he sat at the bedside of Gretchen's mother, watching the casement slowly grow a "glimmering square," and how, as the Great Messenger drew near, vague regret filled his heart, and he realised that he had neglected to water the flower of a woman's love until, little by little, it drooped and pined and faded away, and all that was left of it was but a handful of ashes. And even then she hadn't reproached him, but with one last dying effort had thrown her wasted arm around his neck, and besought him to deal very tenderly with little Gretchen. And this was the way he had kept his promise. His promise! The rust of years had eaten away his soul, and corroded all that was good in it. In pursuing that blind chimera, that shadow of a dream, that will-o'-the-wisp, which men call Fame, he had neglected and crushed the woman-heart in a woman, and was now doing the same with his daughter. What would it avail him at that awful moment which comes to us all, when he sought to free his soul from the guilt of blood? Law wouldn't call it murder; men wouldn't recognise it as wicked; but the professor, as one awakening from a dream, knew what he had done. And the knowledge awoke the sleeping manhood of other years, before he had become a selfish, soulless egotist, wrapped up in his own importance. He sat by Gretchen's side, and marked how thin she was. After all, what was Fame if it robbed one of everything else? What duty to humanity at large could by any possibility make it right for him to neglect his own daughter? Could there be any lasting fame in a work built on his own aggrandisement? Wouldn't it crumble away and be forgotten? The professor was not much given to poetry, but he took down an old book, and looked out "Ozymandias":—

> "And on the pedestal these words appear:
> 'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
> Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair.'
> Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
> Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
> The lone and level sands stretch far away."

And nothing would come of the professor's work if he neglected the duties under his nose, and sought to be remembered by his books alone. He gave a slight shiver. Perhaps it might not be too late.

Presently Gretchen awoke.

"Please, papa, don't tell Arnold," she said; "it would only frighten him."

The professor poured out tea in silence. He had actually prepared it himself.

"Why not?" he asked, as he brought her a cup to the sofa, with a slice of toast, made only as the professor could make it.

The girl took the tea and toast gratefully. "It is very good of you, Daddy. You—you won't tell Arnold?"

The professor looked at her scrutinisingly. "Why don't you want me to tell him?"

"Because it will only make him unhappy, papa."

The professor put down his cup. "You've got something on your mind," he said, with startling abruptness. "Is it m—me?"

"N—no, papa.'

"You're not going to—to die?"

"I don't know," said Gretchen.

"Nonsense!" said the professor. "You've got to get married: make your dresses and things: that ought to keep you alive. There's the—the young man in the 'blazer.' His English is not Chesterfieldian, but he makes the place lively. He's more taste than I thought. Only the other day he told me what a privilege it was to be intimately connected with me. He's a very sensible fellow."

The girl flushed crimson. Even the professor's purblind eyes noted her sudden accession of colour. Her pulse gave little leaps and bounds.

"So that's it, is it?" he asked; "it's the things. I thought we should get at something."

"Partly, papa."

"Good thing I found you out," quoth the professor. "Why couldn't you tell me, Gretchen?" Then he remembered what he had said. "Of course you couldn't after my being such a bear. Gretchen, I'm—I'm sorry."

The professor sat lost in thought. He hadn't any money. The girl's delicate scruples filled him with remorse. Stay—there was one way out of the difficulty: those dainty dishes invented by himself, and which he had meant to bequeath to the higher intelligence of the nation.

He put on his overcoat without once calling for Gretchen to help him. Then he came back and kissed her.

"I'll return in an hour," he said. "Try to go to sleep, Gretchen."

He went forth into the blusterous evening. Then he called a hansom. "Reckless extravagance!" he muttered. "Never mind. Friend Bloggs shall pay for it."

"Where to, guv'nor?" asked the driver, in the husky tones peculiar to his tribe.

"The 'Megatherium,' Bloomsbury," said the professor, settling himself in a corner of the cab.

Arrived at the "Megatherium," he sought out Bloggs.

"Come into the library, Bloggs," he said abruptly.

Bloggs came into the library.

"Look here, Bloggs: you've been trying all your life to bring out a book on cookery, but you never could get dishes enough."

"I'm better at eating 'em than making 'em," said Bloggs, with a sigh. "I'd rather bring out a book on cookery than discover who were really the ten tribes. I once made you an offer for your recipes, Professor."

"That's what I've come about."

"You're not going to give 'em to the nation, then?" cried Bloggs, licking his lips.

"No. What was it you offered me?"

"Fifty pounds; but I'll make it seventy," said Bloggs.

"Can't sell my birthright for a mess of pottage," said the professor. "Old Branders" (Bloggs' rival) "would give me more."

"Make it a hundred," said Bloggs, drawing out his cheque-book.

"I'd rather have it in notes."

"Very well." Bloggs rang for the club secretary, who obligingly gave the money in exchange for Bloggs' cheque.

"Where are they," chuckled Bloggs. "I'm to do what I like with 'em?"

"Of course. Palm them off as your own, and achieve undying fame," said the professor bitterly, as he produced the bundle of recipes.

Bloggs joyously clutched the bundle. Then he noticed that the professor was very pale. "How are the butterflies getting on?" he asked.

"Oh, very well," indifferently said the professor. "I cared more about these than the butterflies."

He momentarily buried his face in his hands, and then placed the latter in the region of his waistcoat as if all the world would henceforth be a hollow mockery.

Bloggs looked at him curiously. "Don't want to seem inquisitive" (they had been friends from boyhood), "but what induced you to part with them?"

The professor hesitated.

"Oh, only a trifle," he said, a little unsteadily. "I muddled away the money I ought to have saved for my daughter's trousseau. The poor girl was fretting her life out about it. This was the only way I could think of to make her amends."

Bloggs stared, but he only said, "Good-night," and the professor went back to Camberwell.

He came in very quietly. Arnold had not yet arrived. Gretchen was looking better. In his remorseful eagerness, the professor could not stay to take off his coat. He fell on his knees beside the sofa, and fluttered the crisp bank-notes into her hands. "There, Gretchen!" he said.

Gretchen gave a happy little cry. "Papa, papa, where did you get them?"

"My recipes," said the professor, with mournful satisfaction. "I've sold them to that beast, Bloggs. He'll publish them, and be known as a second Brillat-Savarin."

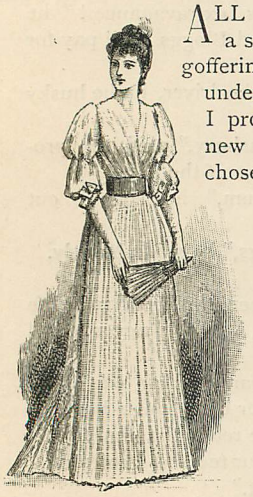
But he was unjust to "that beast, Bloggs." Bloggs thought the matter over, and when he published the recipes, did so in the professor's name as well as his own. He deducted his hundred pounds out of the profits, and sent on the agreement to the professor, who is now drawing a handsome income from it.

Gretchen looked very sweet and beautiful in her bridal array. The little rose-decked bower of her dreams became a reality, and Belmour Gardens knew her no more. It is needless to say that the professor's great work on butterflies has not yet appeared. In the meantime, he is compiling a work on mushrooms, and in his anxiety to invent more varieties has nearly poisoned himself several times. "There would appear to be no infallible test," he is reported to have observed to Gretchen, after the nearly final nature of his last experiment: "no infallible test. If you live, it's a mushroom; nothing but an inquest conclusively proves that it isn't."

CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.—WHAT TO WEAR IN APRIL.

FROM OUR LONDON AND PARIS CORRESPONDENTS.

I.—FROM OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENT.



ALL the fashions this year point to a strong predilection for pleating, goffering, and gathering. You will understand my meaning better when I proceed to describe some of the new spring materials; but I have chosen for my initial sketch an accordion pleated dress, in order that you may see how excellently this same idea can be carried out. It would be difficult to imagine a more simple or elegant little costume for a young girl or a young married woman. It can be made in either soft silk, wool, or muslin. The skirt touches the ground, and is kilt pleated all round. It needs an under-petticoat, or a foundation if you will, but has no trimming whatever, save two long sash ends, which fall from the waist band over the back of the gown. The bodice ends at the waist beneath the belt, which is about three inches deep. On the shoulders the bodice is full, as well as at the waist, and opens in a V-form both back and front, without the addition of any lace or chiffon whatever. The sleeves are composed of two voluminous puffs, which end at the elbow, where there is a ribbon rosette formed of four loops. A little aigrette of narrower ribbon and osprey nestles in the hair, the fan is white, indeed there is not a touch of colour in the whole costume.

We are beginning to hope now for more sunshine and warmer days. There is a distinct inclination in the spring modes towards Princess gowns; some of them are really cut in one, while others are only simulated. An example of the latter in the illustration, is a pretty fawn coloured dress which appears to

have stole ends falling on the skirt, and these are really part of the bodice. The petticoat is made of woollen material with stripes, and the stuff is so cut that these lines run diagonally. They are irregular, the wider being of a darker tone than the ground, the narrower of a distinct gold shade. At the back the cross cut seams form an accentuated point on the ground. The skirt opens at the side to show a broad pleat of silk, and a rouleau of the same silk borders a cross cut band of green velvet, placed at the edge. A similar fold encircles the collar, and the hat is of the same green velvet trimmed with green quills and ostrich feathers to match, but tipped with gold. The shape of this hat will be one of the most fashionable during the year. The brim is flat and covered with velvet on both sides. The feathers are placed high above the crown, while immediately in front, a cross-way fold of velvet is pleated into a fan shape.

I have, however, a good deal more to tell you about the dress. The bodice is made of silk of the fawn shade and is elaborately trimmed, as you will see, with cord and bead passementerie, from which falls a fringe of silk and chenille. The bodice is invisibly fastened beneath the tapering revers placed on either side, and the fronts are elongated to resemble braces, the ends showing the trimming which reappears on the cuffs and on the immediate centre of the front, below the all-round collar band. The sleeves are ruffled, wide on the shoulder and tapering towards the wrist, where is another band of green velvet. The back of this bodice is cut without any seams save under the arm, and is continued to the hem in a couple of stole ends. This is a sort of dress which ought to be worn out of doors without any mantle or cloak.

"WHERE IS OUR CARRIAGE?"

Feathers are replacing fur as the season advances, and I am happy to say for economy's sake the bands used in trimming the skirts are placed some six inches from the edge, as in the third figure illustrated. The model from which it was taken was black velvet, but many of the smart dressmakers are reproducing it in fine Lady's cloth. It is an all-round skirt, you notice, rather fuller than we have been wearing, and the folds are brought well to the front—a good plan where there is no drapery. There are triple rows of black feathers divided by gold embroidery which may be worked on the material or be appliqué to it. It is introduced on the front of the long jacket, on the pockets, and the cuffs. There is nothing remarkably novel in the cut of the jacket, although it is of a shape which is now generally worn, but the all-round basque is somewhat longer. The front trimming tapers towards the bust, where it ends and is met by a boa of ostrich feathers sewn on in a V shape, leaving the collar exposed in the front. The sleeves are also edged with feathers, and are very large at the top. The pocket is a novel feature. It starts from the waist line and has the advantage of diminishing the apparent size of the figure. It is cut in the trefoil shape. The bonnet is larger than we have been wearing, and is composed of pleated velvet trimmed with gold feathers; the strings are tied on one side, and there are no ends to the bow.

The colours which will be worn directly we are in the full enjoyment of spring are to be unusually light. Pale heliotrope, reséda, a pinky brown, grey, a more decided green than we have had of late, veering on peacock tones, and a bright powder-blue as well as the navy blue revived from years ago. It is in these colourings that the wonderful new fabrics of the year have been brought out. Nearly all the woollens are crepé and often diagonally waved and crimped. Many of them have tape stripes, divided by material which appears to have been gathered to them, but the effect is produced in the weaving. Stripes assert themselves in preference to checks, save and except in tweeds, and tailor cloths, where both checks and stripes are relieved by curious fleckings of colour in

silk. Bright orange, for example, seems to thrust itself in a coarse knickerbocker knot, between the fine fibre of stone, grey, and other coloured weavings. Shot materials in these tweeds, especially for light summer makes will be greatly worn, and the faint colourings have also been brought out with quaint vandyke and diagonal patterns in shot mixtures, carried quite across the stuff. Most curious combinations of tones have found their way into new woollens. Bronze-green and silver, for example, blue and black, grenat and green, and dark blue and black.

A good deal of silk is mixed with all the more costly kinds of woollen, and some of them have moiré stripes which divide the crepé and crinkled material. Whether these will catch the dirt or not remains to be proved, but they have the elements of durability. Sometimes diagonal stripes of silk are carried across these wool foundations, and these are a sort of material which would serve a double purpose. They are hardly too smart for country wear, and yet they are admirably suited to almost any occasion in town, always supposing they are fashionably made.

Borders have not gone out, and many vicunas and thinner makes of woollens, have broad tape edges in white, or some solid tone, while the rest of the ground is speckled. But there are many other varieties; indeed it would seem that there is a plethora of choice, that everything will be worn, but it is likely that among the most fashionable women in England, greys, helitropes, and black will have the preference.

It is to be hoped, however, that this notion will not permeate all classes. There is a time to grieve and a time to rejoice, and undue grieving means, in England, ruin to a large proportion of our retail trading community. Dresses countermanded, stuffs not purchased, and a lack of entertainments produce a stagnation in commercial circles which involves the loss of many thousands of pounds to some of the most industrious and painstaking of Her Majesty's subjects.

II.—FROM OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.

In the Parisian capital there is no inkling of the dismal tones in dress which seem at the present moment to be troubling England, and one of the pretty figures in our picture which I am about to describe wears a light apple-green velvet over a tender lemon tint, but seems to be a component part of it. It is a singularly uncommon and elegant gown. At the back it is cut *en princesse* as far as the shoulder, where it ends all round like a corset. In front this opens in the centre to show a stomacher. There is a flat band of the material at the edge, ending in a button about the size of a franc piece at the top and waist line. In the immediate front the skirt shows a widening box pleat of light yellow silk and is gathered beneath this button, forming a sort of panier where the stomacher ends. To be in the fashion in Paris you must wear, or appear to be wearing, two dresses, one over the other, and you see in this case how it is carried out. The green velvet appears to be put over the light tinted yellow silk, the full shirt peeps above the corset. It has a wired turn-down collar. Below, it has horizontal gatherings which form the stomacher, and the front of the skirt is continued from that. The sleeves, however, are of velvet, made with a full puff from the shoulder enclosed in a band, and close-fitting sleeves below.

The other figure wears a more useful gown. An excellent combination of fawn-coloured striped woollen and brown silk. The brown silk is seen in the front of the skirt and bodice. It peeps through the slashings at the side, and constitutes the lower portion of the sleeve. A soft pinked-out ruche of silk edges the skirt and the upper sleeves, and borders the collar-

AN EXPLORATION PARTY.

band. The gown appears to be made as a Princess; but, in truth, though it is slipped on all together, bodice and skirt join below the waistband. The material of which this dress is made is quite novel. The foundation is wool; on this are close set horizontal lines of a lighter tone of silk, through which the foundation appears to be seen like a network. This style finds great favour in Paris and is repeated in every kind of colour.

Everybody is longing for summer, and certainly when it comes we shall be rewarded by having most seasonable materials to select for our dresses. Manufacturers will not be daunted; "Hope on, hope ever" is their motto. Notwithstanding the discouragements of past seasons we have a larger choice of thin muslins and cottons than I remember for a long time. The greatest novelty in muslins are those with spotted foundations, white—but printed with important floral designs in one solid colour. Convolvulus, hyacinths, wild geranium and many other favourite blooms are thus treated. The cottons have generally also white grounds, and are printed with tiny little flowers and are most useful in their appearance; but spots of the pea size, and smaller, in white on plain pink and blue, are finding their way into the work-rooms of many of our best dressmakers, possibly for the English market; which just now is being principally catered for. However, the gem of all the selection of summer fabrics I have yet seen is in delaine. They are printed in the most artistic fashion, in lovely bouquets which look as if they had just been gathered and thrown on the material. The delightful patterns of Louis XV. and Louis XVI. periods, when so many good artists contributed their quota to feminine adornment, have been consulted and reproduced. One of these designs shows a basket of flowers suspended by long ribbon bows, and accompanied by arrows, quivers, and garden implements, such as a rake and a watering-pot. But the colouring is so good and the design so skilfully managed, that there is nothing the least *bizarre* in the effect. Some of the delaines have dark blue, deep red, and petunia-tinted grounds, but the majority are white, and are singularly summer-like and rustic looking. Nothing could be better suited to garden *fêtes* and country parties.

Some of the cottons have a feather-like effect, and so have the woollens. You would almost fancy the feather down had been interwoven with the thread.

We have by no means done with the corduroy element which has been playing an important part for the last twelve months in fashionable dresses, but some of the newest cotélé cloths have a Jacquard effect in the form of lozenge-shaped silk designs. Pompadour patterns have been introduced on a long range of crépon cloths which are sure to be worn all the summer through; some of these have certainly been copied in dresses worn a hundred years ago, and the colouring is curious and often crude; for example, on a grass green foundation there are silk flowers and running patterns of foliage, very small but of a decided tint, such as red, pink, or heliotrope, and these stand out in bold relief. They are likely to be made up in *paysanne* style with large paniers accompanied by broad-brimmed hats adorned with flowers, for we are nothing now unless we are picturesque.

Everybody is not blessed with too much money, and silk petticoats with the present style of skirts have so much to do with good dressing, that possibly many will be glad to hear that they can replace them by a rustling stuff which has all the effect of silk with three times its durability. It is like most good things, a revival, and will be more and more extensively worn—I allude to moreen. It is more silky and a little less heavy than the stuff of the same name we wore, or possibly our mothers used to wear, twenty or thirty years ago. I have seen it generally made in a dark blue colour, and it is certainly better when it has coloured satin stripes. The width of the material makes the depth of the skirt, and it takes two yards and a quarter in your English measure. It costs here about three francs, so it is not expensive; and whereas a cheap glacé silk skirt soon rubs into ribbons, this will look well to the end, and does not need any trimming whatever.

French dressmakers are having a great success with a new garment which serves a double purpose—the Manteau robe. It is suited for a cloak or wrap as well as for a tea-gown. It is always made in rich brocades, and I note that there is an inclination to produce most tea-gowns of costly stuff. Its style is inspired by Tudor fashions, upon which we appear to have fallen back a great deal of late. Bodice and skirt are cut in one, the sleeves are high and it shows the lining, generally of some delicate tint, which matches the petticoat. Handsome girdles are worn with this and all other tea-gowns, and French women are favouring all that is massive and important-looking. It is said that women are gaining in stature from generation to generation, and they will need to do this if such styles are to continue. Most of the new trimmings are equally elaborate and suited to be worn with such rich stuffs. The colourings in silks are deep and brilliant, while in lighter fabrics they are paler and more subdued, but brightness is now a feature in fashionable colourings.

THE GATHERER:

AN ILLUSTRATED RECORD OF INVENTION, DISCOVERY, LITERATURE, AND SCIENCE.

Correspondents are requested, when applying to the Editor for the names and addresses of the persons from whom further particulars respecting the articles in the GATHERER may be obtained, to forward a stamped and addressed envelope for reply, and in the case of inventors submitting specimens for notice, to prepay the carriage. The Editor cannot in any case guarantee absolute certainty of information, nor can he pledge himself to notice every article or work submitted.

Photographing the Walk.

FIG. 1.

The instantaneous photograph is now a recognised aid in science and art for the study of animal, vegetable, and even mineral motions. The unassisted eye is unable to follow the different phases of rapid translation—for example, the track of a lightning flash, the beating of a bird's wings in flight, the movements of a horse's legs in running, the whirling of leaves, or the splashing of water. The instantaneous photograph has already enabled us to discover among other things that the conventional zig-zag flash of lightning does not exist, and therefore it is already disappearing from works of art. Moreover, it appears that artists hitherto have been misled by the eye in drawing running horses; the positions of the legs as often represented by them are, in fact, impossible. Science has come to the help of art, and it would be foolish for an artist to disdain her teachings if only for this reason, that when the spectator of a work of art is sufficiently educated to detect a fault in it contrary to Nature, his pleasure in the work is marred, and in some cases destroyed. Mr. Ruskin has inveighed against the cultivation of science by artists, as if it would prove their ruin; but it seems to us that he is only in part right. It is possible for an artist to become so steeped in science as to grovel and thus lose his artistic sense of the beautiful; but, on the other hand, a regard for science by correcting his imagination and judgment will keep him true to Nature, and prevent him from blemishing his work with errors. The proper course, as usual, seems to lie in the golden mean. As the world gets more scientific the necessity for truth to Nature will become more incumbent on the artist who desires his works to last. In portraying the human walk by a stride with both feet on the ground, the artist has not erred, because at the beginning and end of both steps the feet rest on the ground for a time long enough to leave a distinct impression on the eye. When one foot swings past the other we do not get so distinct an impression, and moreover, if this moment were chosen by the artist, and the act faithfully rendered, the person—as first shown by the brothers Weber in 1836—would seem to stumble over his own feet. Of late, M. Dumeny, a disciple of M. Marey, the well-known photographer of animal movements, has been making a complete study of the movements of a man in walking, by means of small incandescent lamps attached to his dress, which was tight and of black cloth, as shown in Fig. 1. By photographing these lamps as the man walked or ran against a dark background, the various positions of the body and limbs were observed. Fig. 2 shows the successive images obtained in this way from a runner; the white dots and lines indicating the attitudes of his chief members. Fig. 3 is the analysis of a running high jump, obtained on a fixed plate by means of twenty-five images in a second. The diagram is somewhat eccentric, not to say demoniac, and reminds us of the *disjecta membra* of Mr. Maskelyne's living skeleton in the dark *séance;* but it is possible to make something of it. Obviously the skeleton gymnast is preparing to leap on the right, and from the manner in which his spider limbs are drawn up at the middle, he is probably clearing the bar. The curve of descent is plainly visible on the other side, although the arms have certainly taken a peculiar turn. This nice "derangement of photographs" would probably surprise a professional

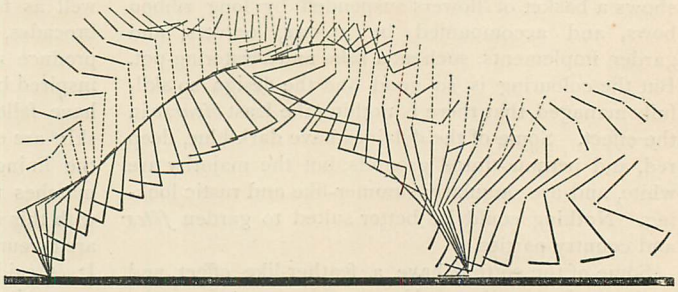


FIG. 3.—THE HIGH JUMP.

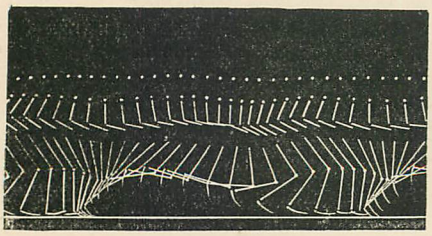
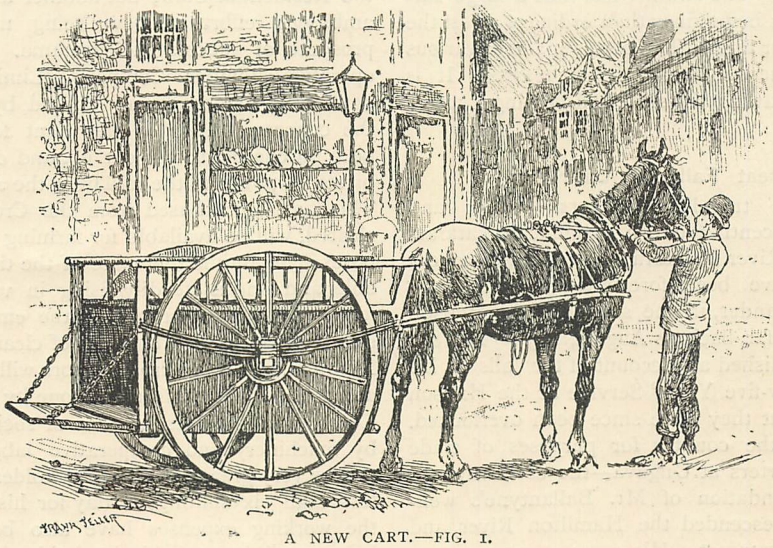


FIG. 2.—A RUNNER.



A NEW CART.—FIG. 1.

jumper, who cannot be expected to realise the absurd figure which he cuts in the air ; but, of course, the zoëtrope by combining the several views would harmonise the whole.

A New Cart.

In the cart or van devised by Sergeant-Major Pepper, each wheel is slung between two springs and runs on a short iron arm attached to the springs, which are shackled to projections on the sides of the vehicle as shown in Fig 1. This arrangement allows the floor of the vehicle to come close to the ground,

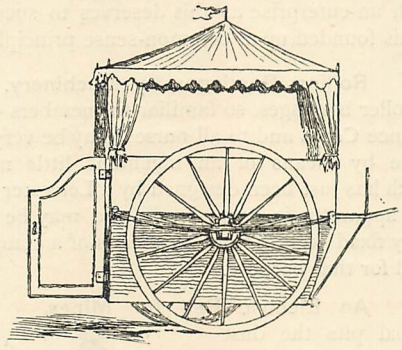


FIG. 2.

a special advantage in tradesmen's carts as well as carriages for ladies, invalids, or children. The vans are fitted up for the use of different trades, and the inventor has also devised some new kinds of vehicles, one of which is illustrated in Fig. 2.

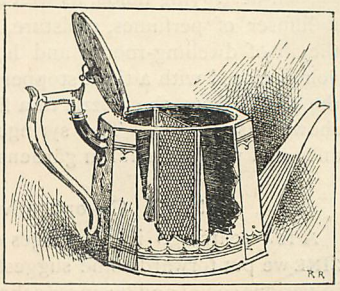
A Magnetic Tack Driver.

A new tack driver, called the "Eureka," has recently been patented, which seems very likely to be useful with tin tacks. This simple apparatus consists of a plunger which is drawn inside a brass sheath by means of a light wire spring. In use, the sheath is pulled towards the handle of the plunger, while the head of the latter, which is magnetised, is allowed to take up the tack for use. The sheath being then released covers the point of the tack, and all that is necessary to do is, to place the end of the sheath over the spot where the tack is required, and give a sharp blow to the handle. A little extractor is supplied with the instrument for taking out any tacks which may be wrongly placed.

A Shoal Water Tell-tale.

Obviously a sounding apparatus which would tell the captain of a vessel when he had reached a certain depth of shoal water would be of great service, and it is satisfactory to learn that such an apparatus is now in use. It consists of a sounding lead, which is submerged to the depth required and dragged by the vessel as she goes on. To keep the lead-line at a constant inclination to the bottom, an arrangement like a kite is employed, the kite sailing against the water at a certain angle, and when the lead strikes the bottom the alarm is given by the sudden slackening of the lead-line actuating a bell on board. In approaching land this device cannot fail to be useful, since it can be set to any depth.

A New Tea-pot.

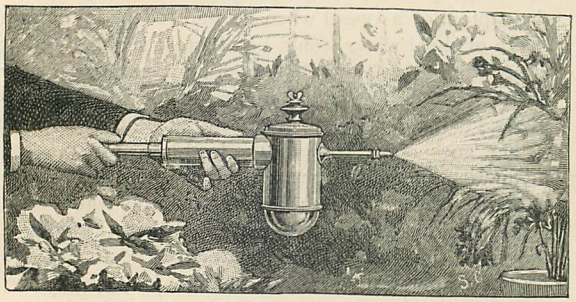


In ordinary tea-pots the straining of the leaves is done at the last moment and through a small area of holes ; but in the tea-pot which we illustrate the interior is divided into two compartments by a perforated sliding partition, and the leaves are placed behind it so that in the compartment next the spout there is a clear infusion

ready to pour out. The strainer has thus a large surface, and the holes being finer than ordinary arrest the small broken tea or dust. The pot is made of various designs to suit the wants of different classes. It is cleaned by withdrawing the slide and holding it under the water tap.

The Great Falls of Labrador.

Two American travellers, Messrs. Bryant and Kenaston, have recently found a magnificent cataract on the Hamilton River in Labrador; but the discovery turns out to have been forestalled by Mr. John Maclean, a Highlander, in the service of the Hudson Bay Company as far back as August, 1839. In 1849 Mr. Maclean published an account of the falls in his "Notes of Twenty-five Years' Service at the Hudson Bay Territory," but they have since been overlooked. While exploring the country for purposes of trade from his headquarters at Ungava—the establishment which is the foundation of Mr. Ballantyne's well-known tale—he descended the Hamilton River, and came upon the cataract. His account agrees very closely with that of the American travellers, who have really added very little that is new. A few miles above the falls the river contracts from about 500 to 100, and finally to fifty yards at the brink. After its leap or rather series of leaps amounting to about 500 feet, it continues to foam and roar through a cañon thirty miles long, the walls rising in some places to a height of 300 feet. The vapour of the cataract could be seen for many miles, and the rock vibrated under the shock of the descending water.



A Reservoir Syringe.

A garden syringe with a reservoir attached is illustrated herewith, and forms an excellent distributor of vermin-destroying fluids, as well as a plant waterer or a diffuser of perfumes, moisture, and disinfectants, in the air of dwelling-rooms and hospitals. The reservoir is closed with a tight stopper and the pump forces the liquid from the nozzle in a fine spray or a strong shower as desired. The syringe has a neat appearance and will be useful in gardens as well as homes.

A Novel Co-operative Society.

A few years ago in the pages of CASSELL'S MAGAZINE we put forward some suggestions for co-operation in various social and business schemes. These papers, written by Mr. Henry Frith, have, apparently, been instrumental in aiding several associations, notably the Residential Club; but another and perhaps more ambitious effort is now being made with every prospect of success in Tasmania. This is a "Co-operative Timber Company, Limited," which will be entirely managed and worked by shareholders in the concern. Already the plant for saw-mills has been purchased, to fell, cut up, and convey the timber by steam-power to the mill from the acquired territory. This land is purchased from the Crown; and, when cleared, will be available for farming and grazing purposes. Meantime the value of the timber is considerable, and land is steadily rising in value. The novel feature in this enterprise is the employment of the shareholders in the business of clearing and farming. Nearly the whole of the mill-work will be done by them, and as such work is often done by gentlemen in the Colonies, it involves no loss of social status. Thus, by machinery and co-operative labour, the savings will be very great. Each shareholder will be paid not less than six shillings a day for his work, and when the working expenses have also been satisfied the balance will be available for dividends. There are no "directors"; a manager has already arrived at Port Sorell with the first contingent of shareholders, each of whom must take at least ten shares (£100), but cannot have more than thirty (£300) in the venture. The cost of living is very small; there are many healthful amusements, and the climate is perfect. Already many young gentlemen of superior standing in London have cast in their lot with the promoters, and will find very healthful as well as remunerative employment. No "drones" will be permitted to remain in the hive. Those who will not, or cannot, work, will be voted out, and will have their money returned, if required. Such an enterprise as this deserves to succeed; it seems founded upon common-sense principles.

Rolling Bandages by Machinery.

Roller bandages, so familiar to members of Ambulance Corps and to all nurses, may be very easily made by means of an ingenious little machine which has just been designed by a Leicester maker. The apparatus is very simple, and may be temporarily fixed to any table by means of a clamp supplied for that purpose.

An Electric Bell for Mines.

In coal pits the dust often deranges an ordinary electric bell, and hence in that which we illustrate the works are enclosed in a cast-iron air-tight case, C, to which the current is led by insulated wires, W. The gong, G, is supported on a metal bracket, and the hammer, H, which strikes inside it is attached to the middle of a flexible

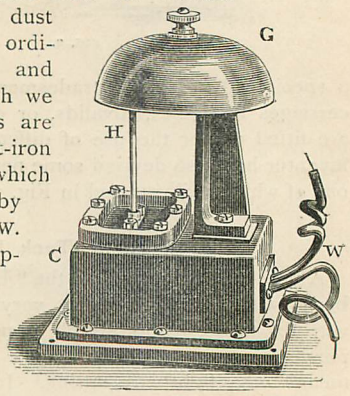


FIG. 1.

iron diaphragm which allows it to swing freely while superseding the pivots and springs of ordinary electric bells. Both single stroke and trembling bells are made

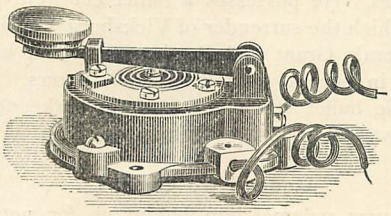


FIG. 2.

on this principle. The key for ringing these bells is shown in Fig. 2, and in it the contacts are also enclosed in an air-tight case, the stroke being communicated through a flexible diaphragm.

Assurance against Blindness.

When blindness is the result of accident, it may be said that schemes of insurance against its consequences are already at work under the operation of the various Accident Assurance Societies. But, after all, these cases bear only a very small proportion to the terrible sum total of those to whom knowledge at this one entrance is quite shut out. How often do we hear of professional and literary men, teachers and students being rendered helpless by gradual loss of sight! Yet there has hitherto been no organised system of provision against this calamity. Now we hear that Mr. J. Cuthbert Goulding is the founder of a society in which one may insure against blindness, and whose "tables" are based upon the latest authorised statistics. No doubt the actuarial calculations will present new but not insuperable problems, but the scheme is interesting as an attempt to provide otherwise than by charity against the results of a most crippling calamity.

New Heliostats.

The improved heliostat which we illustrate in Fig. 1, is made by Mr. Yeates, the well-known scientific instrument maker to the University of Dublin. It is adjustable for any latitude on either side of the Equator, and the mirror, M, which reflects the sun's rays in signalling, is unrestricted in its movements so that a ray can be flashed in any direction. Mr. Yeates also makes the new local heliostat of

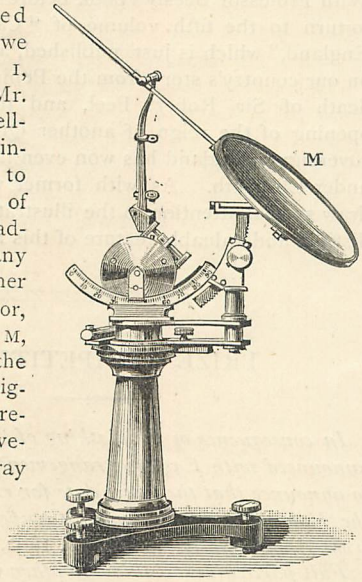


FIG. 1.

Mr. G. T. Stoney, shown in Fig. 2. It is used in the following way: Having wound up the clock and adjusted the arc, A, to the latitude, place the instrument level in the due north and south line, then turn the arm, S, towards the sun until the rays pass through the sight-hole, O, and form a bright spot in the centre of the disc, D. The mirror, M, must then be turned until the sunbeam is reflected in the direction it has to go.

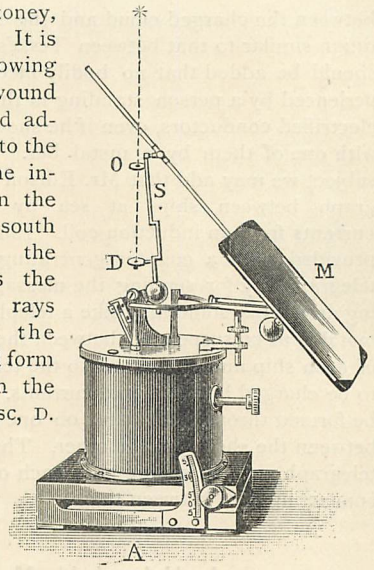


FIG. 2.

A New Mode of Electric Lighting.

In a former GATHERER we described the more important of Mr. Nikola Tesla's discoveries, but since then he has made further observations which were recently described to an extraordinary meeting of the Institution of Electrical Engineers. The currents he employs to produce the effects are obtained either from a dynamo of special construction or an induction coil through the primary circuit of which the spark from a battery of Leyden jars is passed. These currents have an enormously high "pressure," from 50,000 to over 100,000 volts, and they see-saw or change in direction 23,000 to a million or more times a second. When they are passed through a bare wire it becomes visible in the dark with a kind of violet phosphorescence; and sheets of bluish light are seen to pass from one wire to another. Vacuum bulbs placed between two wires or metal plates connected to the poles of the generator glow with a nebulous lustre, and if discs or other pieces of solid matter—such as carbon, aluminium, lime, or crystals of salts—are contained in the tubes, they become incandescent, and emit a star-like radiance in the midst of the luminous haze filling the bulb. Tubes containing phosphorescent materials when connected to one pole of the generator, become filled with phosphorescent light of the tint produced by the matter in question. Mr. Tesla explains these and other effects by supposing that the molecules of air around and between the wires are in violent agitation, thus producing the lights. The agitated air by merely beating on a solid body, such as a detached piece of metal or carbon, will heat it white hot, as in the case of the discs in the vacuum tubes. This observation helps to explain why it is that watches are sometimes fused in the pockets of the wearers during a thunderstorm, although the persons have not been injured. The lightning flash is now believed to be oscillatory like the spark from a Leyden jar or the currents of Tesla's dynamo. It follows that during a flash the air

between the charged cloud and the earth is in a condition similar to that between Tesla's conductors. It should be added that no bodily inconvenience is experienced by a person standing in the air between the electrified conductors, even if he should make contact with one of them by a metal bar. While upon this subject we may add that Mr. Edison proposes to telegraph between ships at sea by the intermittent currents from an induction coil. Each vessel is to be provided with a coil for generating the currents, a telegraph key for sending the message, and a receiving apparatus something like a telephone. A sheet of metal is to be suspended between the masts on board of each ship and connected to the telegraph key so as to be charged by the signal currents. The circuit will be formed through the water on one hand and the air between the sheets on the other. Thus two ships may telegraph news in sailing past each other without any connecting wire between them.

An Unbreakable Mug.

A new domestic mug of steel, enamelled inside, is shown in our woodcut. Being on steel the enamel does not chip as on common enamelled iron utensils. The mug is also lighter and thinner than earthenware, and weighs only half a pound. It will not indent like pewter and, of course, is more easily cleaned than a pewter vessel. These mugs are made to hold a standard pint, and are thus capable of measuring liquids. While upon this subject we may refer to a new composite material of iron wire coated with glass, which has been introduced in Dresden. The adhesion of the glass to the metal is so perfect that it will stand severe fluctuations of temperature. It is expected to be useful in making chemical appliances and roof or pavement lights.

The Ginger-Beer Plant.

Professor H. M. Ward, of the Indian Engineering College, Cooper's Hill, has communicated an interesting paper to the Royal Society on the "ginger-beer plant" which is familiar to our cottagers. He finds it to consist mainly of a new species of yeast, to which he has given the name of *Saccharomyces pyriformis*, and also of a new bacterium which he calls *B. vermiforme*. Two other forms of life are largely associated with these, and in addition there is sometimes a variety of yeasts, moulds, and bacilli. The *S. pyriformis* is capable of fermenting cane but not milk sugar, and it develops large quantities of carbonic acid, the gas of the ginger-beer, but very little alcohol. The *B. vermiforme* is worm-like in shape, as its name implies, and forms the greater part of the jelly-like masses of the ginger-beer plant.

Lead Pipes and Insects.

Mr. W. E. Selleck, of Chicago, has called attention to the fact that certain insects are able to bore holes in lead pipes. He possesses a bullet cut from the tree under which the surrender of Vicksburg was arranged by Generals Grant and Pemberton, which has been pierced in several places by these borers. In fact, when the bullet was cut out of the bark one of the insects was found in it.

Under Two Queens.

Two new volumes are before us for notice this month, dealing with widely differing periods of English history. The first is Professor Beesly's "Queen Elizabeth," in the "Twelve English Statesmen" series, published by Messrs. Macmillan & Co. In his opening chapter the author gives us a character sketch of the Queen that is almost epigrammatic in its point. "With Elizabeth," he says, "the heart never really spoke, and if the senses did, she had them under perfect control. And this was why she never loved or was loved, and never has been or will be regarded with enthusiasm by either man or woman." But for all that she earned the title "Good Queen Bess," through a long reign which opened with England Roman Catholic, and closed with its Protestantism firmly established, and which was fuller than most periods of equal length of plots and cabals against the person of the sovereign. "Few rulers," says Professor Beesly, in summing up his admirable little monologue "have had to contend with such formidable and complicated difficulties as the English Queen. Few have surmounted them so triumphantly." This work is one of the brightest and most readable of the whole series, though in brilliancy it may have been surpassed by one or two of its predecessors. If it stood alone it would be worthy of high praise; we cannot give it higher than to say it is worthy of the company in which it stands. With Professor Beesly's book before us it is interesting to turn to the fifth volume of "Cassell's History of England," which is just published, and which carries on our country's story from the Peninsular War to the death of Sir Robert Peel, and thus includes the opening of the reign of another Queen, under whose sovereignty England has won even nobler laurels than under Elizabeth. As with former volumes, we must draw special attention to the illustrations, which are a distinct and valuable feature of this history.

PRIZE COMPETITIONS.

In consequence of the clashing of the date previously announced with Easter arrangements, the Editor begs to announce that the latest date for receiving MSS. in the Household Management Competition is extended from April 15th to April 20th, 1892.

Full particulars of this and other Competitions were given on page 128 of our January number.

(*Drawn by* Percy Tarrant.)

THE LADY OF THE MANOR.—IV. AT LAST!

FORMED FOR CONQUEST.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

"When I saw him tangled in her toils,
A shame, said I, if she adds just him
To her nine-and-ninety other spoils,
The hundredth for a whim!"

AMARIS was unjust towards Helen.

That young woman was not altogether amusing herself with Jim Trevarthick. She meant to finish with him when Mr. Vanburgh appeared on the scene, but she would be sorry. As far as Helen was capable of loving, she loved Jim Trevarthick. Various reasons combined to foster this feeling.

To begin with, he had not fallen in love with her: that had given piquancy to the affair. He might pretend to be so, but Helen had been too well loved not to discover the sham; secondly, he was good-looking in a way that appealed to Helen's senses; thirdly, she was determined to win him from the woman he did love; and lastly, he served to pass the time in this dull village.

She regretted that Vanburgh Court did not belong to him; it would have been delightful if liking had jumped with prudence. She was still secure of her powers to charm. With time she was sure that she could make him love her and forget that cousin of hers.

She changed from indifferent to scornful insolence towards Damaris. She longed to make her angry, to make her answer her remarks. But Damaris looked at her with that cool impersonal gaze of hers, and Helen was not sure she heard the pointed speeches. If she heard, she did not heed.

One morning towards the end of September, Damaris stood on the cliff where we saw her first. She leant on the shaky lichen-covered railings at the edge, and looked down on the beach. It was low tide, and the pebbles made a blue-grey winding ribbon round the coast. A sharp westerly wind blew against her face, and the murmur of the waves was louder than usual. This cliff was close to Lynscombe, though the rocks rising on her left prevented her from seeing the valley or the mill.

A man and woman came into sight, walking on the beach below. Damaris started, and shielded her eyes with her hand from the sun. As she looked the man bent his head and kissed the woman; his arm was round her waist. In another second they were out of sight, hidden by the rocks. Damaris walked slowly home.

That night she knocked at Helen's bedroom door and asked for admittance.

Helen was in her dressing-gown, brushing her long bronze-coloured hair.

"I saw you with Jim Trevarthick this morning," said Damaris, walking to the dressing-table, and facing Helen.

"You did? Where?"

"At Cliff, by Lynscombe."

"Yes?"

"He was kissing you."

"Are you jealous?"

Helen had not even the grace to blush. She looked at Damaris with a half-smile on her lips.

"Do you intend to marry him?"

"No."

Damaris looked at the fair woman with a shiver of repugnance.

"I certainly shall not marry him; I could not possibly afford it; he is not rich enough," continued Helen coolly.

"Yet you allow him to kiss you?"

"Pooh! many men have kissed me. What is there in that? Come, Damaris, you are too old to pretend to be shocked. You are not a girl of eighteen, to think it a dreadful matter."

Helen leant her head against the chair, and half-closed her long violet eyes. Then she continued,

"I am quite capable of taking care of myself, my dear Damaris; you need not interfere. You think a little flirtation a great matter. It is very pleasant, I assure you."

Helen paused.

"Why do you not say how you despise me?" she continued, with a yawn. "I see it in your eyes that you do. Why not say it out? It will relieve your mind, and it will not hurt me."

"I do not despise you: you are too beautiful; but——"

"You think I should not take your lover from you," interrupted Helen. "Jim Trevarthick *was* your lover, I believe? But you must blame him, not me, for that."

Helen gathered her hair in her hands and drew it down on either side of her face. Her narrowed eyes, chiselled nose, and red line of lips were reflected in the glass in the setting of silky red-gold hair. She smiled triumphantly at the reflection.

"I could not blame him, even supposing I had cared for him," said Damaris; "but I did not care."

Helen could not mistake the accent of truth in her voice.

"But I have known him all my life, and I should be sorry for harm to happen to poor Jim. Could you not leave him alone, Helen?"

"For you, I suppose," said Helen.

She was angry that the man whom she liked should be despised by this plain, cold woman. She was clever enough to hear in Damaris' clear voice the accent of contempt; but no earthly power would make her own that she did so. She preferred to take the ground that Damaris loved Trevarthick and was jealous of her—Helen.

"Not for me," said Damaris calmly. "That fancy

of his, poor fellow, has passed. But for his own sake let him go, Helen. You are only doing it for amusement; he can be nothing to you: a half-educated, under-bred man as he is."

Helen could have struck her cousin for those contemptuous words.

"His vanity makes him think far more of the liberties you permit him to take than you imagine," continued Damaris calmly, little dreaming of the storm raging in Helen. "His conceit——"

"He would be pleased to hear his advocate," interrupted Helen, with a sneer.

"His vanity and conceit are the strongest part of his nature. It is cruel and wrong to let him think you mean to marry him."

Helen threw her silver-backed brush with a clatter on the dressing-table.

"Really, Damaris, I have listened to you long enough. I shall go my own way; nothing you can say would change me. I know you are jealous of me; everyone knows that. It is the common talk of the village. You can smile, but it is so! Go and warn Jim Trevarthick that I am only playing with him: it is of no use coming to me. Now go! I am tired, and want to get to bed, not to listen to the fancies of a jealous woman."

Damaris left the room.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

"——— he sat there pursuing
His suit; weighing out with *nonchalance*
Fine speeches."

A MAN, smoking a short pipe, sat on the deck of a fair-sized yacht. The weather was bitterly cold, the time of year October, and the place the north of Newfoundland. The man was wrapped in a fur-lined great-coat, with a collar turned up above his ears and a fur cap meeting the edges of his coat. He sat on the edge of the yacht's side and swung with the motion, his hands in his pockets.

"Vanburgh!" shouted a voice, "are you coming down to lunch, or do you mean to stop there until you are frozen?"

Vanburgh rose and made his way down to the cabin.

"I was just thinking of sending Williamson with the hatchet to cut you away. I thought you must have frozen where you sat," said a young man seated at the table, helping himself to the plentiful provisions.

Vanburgh had thrown off his coat and cap. He was neither dark nor fair, he was neither handsome nor plain, neither tall nor short. The only two things that redeemed him from the commonplace were his piercing dark eyes and the strength of his well-knit figure. But his eyes were generally half closed, and he walked with his shoulders bent forward. It was not a slouching walk, but as if he thought it scarcely worth while to hold himself upright. For the rest, he was a well-groomed, well-dressed Englishman, with cropped head and a small line of moustache which did not cover his mouth or conceal the bad-tempered expression that mouth occasionally gave his face.

"Vanburgh's all right until he gets his monkey up," was the verdict of his club.

The second man was some years younger than Vanburgh: a neat, frail-looking little man, with a large fair waxed moustache, light blue eyes, and fair hair parted in the middle, and showing a little thin in places, in spite of careful brushings.

"If you came on deck more and did not stew yourself in this cabin reading French novels quite so much, you would bear the cold better, Nixon."

"*I* prefer warmth to this beastly cold. Look here, old fellow: when are you going to a milder climate? I have about had enough of this!"

No one who heard Mr. Henry Nixon talk to Gerald Vanburgh would have guessed their relations to one another. They were that of employer and employed, and Mr. Henry Nixon was *not* the employer. He had been Vanburgh's fag at Eton, his devoted admirer in after-life, and when Nixon's father lost his money, and Harry Nixon "could not dig, to beg he was ashamed," Vanburgh came forward and offered him the post of secretary. He did not require a secretary at the time, but he said that he meant some day to go into Parliament, and that Harry might as well become his secretary at once and learn the work, to be in readiness. Harry accepted the post and handsome salary with gratitude and joy. He really meant to work and earn the money, but physically he was a weak, idle little man, there were few letters to write, and somehow in a few months Vanburgh found that it was easier to write his letters himself than to tell Nixon what to say. But Harry still drew his salary, though occasionally he had a humble fit, and declared that he did not earn the money, and really must go away and find something to do. Vanburgh laughed to scorn such an idea; both men would have been lost the one without the other. Nixon leant on Vanburgh, scolded him and grumbled, yet followed him everywhere; Vanburgh looked upon the little man as a younger brother, nursed him through his illnesses, occasionally confided in him, and often snubbed him, for which Nixon did not care the least.

"In a bad temper, old chappie?" he would say, in the serenest manner, after a particularly bad snub.

But there was no question of snubbing at this time.

Vanburgh ate his lunch in a silence which made Harry look at him more carefully.

"He has some plan in his head," was the result of his observations.

"Well, old chap, what is it?" he asked, when the man-servant had left the room, and the two men had lighted their pipes.

"I've been thinking."

"Rare occurrence!"

"Don't be a fool, Nixon. You know I told you about Helen Desborough."

"Someone else is the fool now."

"I have had enough of this wandering life. It is time I settled down, and she will make as good a wife as any other woman."

"Umph!"

"I know you do not like her, but——"

"I don't dislike her."

Harry's washed-out face was grave enough now.

"She is the handsomest woman I have ever seen."

"There are a good many stories flying round about her."

"Stories! Did you ever know a good-looking woman there was not a story made up about?"

"Yes," said Harry; "there is Lady Auston. I never heard a breath of scandal against her."

"Oh well! Lady Auston is the only one."

"Do you care for Miss Desborough?" said Harry.

He was a sentimental young fellow, and he pretended that his heart had been broken by a cousin who married a millionaire.

"I like her well enough. She is uncommonly good-looking, and I mean to have a handsome woman seated opposite me at my table. Besides, I have gone too far to draw back."

"Ah!"

"She has gone to live with relations at Trentham Cove, where Vanburgh Court is, you know, old fellow. I let her understand that I should visit the place some time in November, and I gave her a hint why."

"'Pon my word, Vanburgh, you are a cool customer!"

"Why?"

"Don't you think she wondered why you did not ask her to become Mrs. Vanburgh on the spot?"

"I never thought of that, but she was not annoyed. I explained I had promised to take you yachting."

"She must have liked that!"

"I thought I would have a few months before I finally settled down."

"How do you know she will have you?" asked Nixon curiously.

He knew that Vanburgh was a man not given to thinking too much of himself, yet in this case he was calmly taking it for granted that a woman, and a very handsome one, was ready to become his wife when he asked her.

"I never thought of that," said Vanburgh, "but—I believe she will."

"Not much doubt of it," muttered Nixon drily.

He believed there was some truth in the rumours connected with Helen Desborough's name.

The men smoked in silence, each occupied with his own thoughts.

"Your marriage will put an end to our old life, Vanburgh."

"Not a bit of it. You shall have your own rooms at my house, and everything will go on the same."

Harry shook his head.

"I studied Miss Desborough before I made up my mind to ask her to be my wife. She is a sensible, kind-hearted, manageable woman. She will not grumble or be put out about trifles, and I know she would be vexed if you did not live with us."

Harry roared with laughter.

"Vanburgh, you know as much about women as I do about—about astronomy: and that is nothing at all. You have taken no notice of women all your life, now you study a woman for a few hours and think you know her in and out. My dear fellow, you know that much!" Harry flipped his fingers.

"I know this much," said Vanburgh; "the woman I marry will have to go my way, not I hers."

"I believe you there, old fellow."

"And a precious hard time she will have of it unless you care for her," Harry added to himself.

He knew Vanburgh's nature; he was a shrewd little man, and six years of constant companionship had laid bare his friend's strength and weakness. Harry had seen Vanburgh in fits of passion with other men, never with himself, for Vanburgh was quiet enough with anyone for whom he cared, and the worst Nixon had experienced from him had been snubs. But he was clever enough to guess what Vanburgh might become, tied to a woman for whom he did not care, fretted at every turn by a nature antipathetic to his own—worried and harassed to frenzy.

"Miss Desborough will be wondering what has become of me if I do not turn up at Trentham some time next month. I was thinking of asking you, Nixon, if you mind our starting for England."

"I shall be glad to get out of this beastly climate," said Nixon, with a shiver. "England will be better than this."

"I shall give the captain orders, then. And look here, Nixon: put out of your head any notions that a woman can make a difference between you and me."

"All right, old man."

But Harry knew, for all that he might say, his friend when married would not be the same.

The yacht steamed for England.

Harry, watching Vanburgh, grew more positive that it was not love which was taking him to Trentham. He could not help chuckling sometimes at Vanburgh's rueful face, much as he pitied him, as day by day they drew nearer the shores of England. Whether Helen Desborough's beauty, coupled with a very real desire to settle and give up his wandering life, had determined Vanburgh to marry, Nixon could not say. Whatever the motives may have been, he repented now, when it was too late.

"You had better change your mind and give up Trentham," said Harry the night before they reached that place.

"Can't be done."

"Probably Miss Desborough has consoled herself by now."

"Look here, Nixon: I may regret what I have done, but I have gone too far to draw back. You shut up, and let me go my own way in peace."

Nixon was silent after that. No one could hold Vanburgh when his mind was once determined.

Harry Nixon could only hope that Helen Desborough was not the woman he thought her to be. If she were, he pitied her as sincerely as he pitied Vanburgh.

Meanwhile, Helen was not at all eager for the arrival of the *Wanderer*, Vanburgh's yacht.

She had given the little heart she possessed to Jim Trevarthick. His indifference towards her—she had

soon discovered that he was indifferent, in spite of his pretence to love—piqued her; her failure to win him from Damaris roused her jealousy.

She threw herself in his way: she met him in the lanes, on the cliffs, in the village. To lookers-on it appeared that Jim Trevarthick followed *her*, so cleverly did she manage the meetings; everywhere they were to be seen together.

Helen was beautiful enough for even women to cease wondering "what men could see in her." To the villagers of Trentham she was a wonderful being, with her looks, her dresses, her ready smile. There was a malicious pleasure for Trentham Cove in seeing Damaris Lemarcham's lover taken away from her.

"Her 'th a' trated us as though us was dirt, and now her 'th bein' paid out for 't," the shrew of Trentham said.

Damaris had sent the woman money when her husband lay ill for weeks with rheumatic fever, but that weighed for nothing. Her manner of looking over their heads, her indifference to what they thought and said of her, annoyed the fisher-folk, as it would have annoyed a better class of people. They did not understand: what they took for pride was indifference; though, perhaps, her indifference might have wounded more than what they called her pride. The real truth was they could not "make her out," and one whom their cleverness could not fathom was one to be avoided and disliked.

They smiled and whispered among themselves when Damaris passed down the village street.

"Her's lookin' wisht," said one.

"Her's regrettin' her trated 'un so badly," said another.

Damaris, with nose in air, heard and saw nothing.

Helen did, though, and she encouraged the gossip that Damaris sorrowed after her lost sweetheart.

Thus matters stood when the *Wanderer* dropped anchor at early morning in the harbour formed by Trentham stone pier.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

"PASS A FESTIVE DAY."

DAMARIS walked down the street.

The village was agog with excitement. The women were hurrying down to the quay in their best dresses, their tongues clacking, their knitting left at home. No remarks were made as Damaris passed among them: they were too busily occupied to think of her.

The sun was bright, but a boisterous wind came in from the west, bringing sharp scuds of cold rain, heavy clouds were in the sky.

The men were already on the pier and beach. They had not taken the time of their women-folk to change their working clothes for their Sunday best.

Old Sam came out of his cottage and joined the hurrying women. Damaris called to him.

"What has happened? Why are the women going down to the quay?"

Sam had caught the excitement. He wore a much-battered billy-cock hat and a shabby black coat over his blue jersey. He had not waited to change his fishing trousers and long sea boots.

"'Tis Mr. Vanburgh, Miss Damaris. He 'th come in his steamer, and us be a-goin' down to give 'un three cheers."

"Of course the man will give them money to drink his health, and it will do Sam no good," said Damaris to herself.

"Stop, Sam!" she said aloud, putting her hand on his arm, "stop! I want you to take me for a sail."

Poor Sam's face fell. He looked at the sky and the sea.

"'Tis a-blowin', Miss."

"I like a good breeze, and I do not mind the rain."

From where they stood they could look down on the harbour. Damaris might have dropped a stone into the yacht by the pier-side. The steamer, as Sam called it, was the centre of a busy scene. It was anchored a few yards from the stone pier, among the fishing craft and boats of the village. The fishermen scrambled across their craft or rowed from the pier to the yacht's side. On the deck of the yacht a warm shaking of hands and many speeches were proceeding. The women, unable to clamber across their husbands' and sons' boats, stood on the edge of the pier, staring and whispering.

The voices of the fishermen came up in a vague murmur to where Damaris stood. The men were dwarfed by the height from which she looked at them. No faces could be distinguished, but a changing ring of men round two figures standing rather apart on the deck showed Mr. Vanburgh shaking hands with one after another of his tenants.

Sam looked from the busy scene to Damaris, and from Damaris to the busy scene. A cheer came from the group on deck: it was too much for Sam; he twitched his arm from her hold and clattered away down the deep descent.

"I'll be back soon, Miss," he shouted.

But Damaris knew better. She would not see him again until there was no hope of more drinks.

She had brought a book with her, intending to find a warm corner, sheltered from the wind and occasional showers of rain, at the side of the pier. But now that was out of the question. She turned back up the street, resolving to pay Mr. Rushton a visit: she wanted to borrow a book from him.

Her step-mother stood in the verandah of their house, shading her eyes from the sun and looking down the street.

"Whatever is the matter, Damaris? Mrs. Vickers and Mrs. Harris have just gone down with their best bonnets on."

"Mr. Vanburgh has arrived in his yacht."

"Doctor, Doctor! here's Damaris says Mr. Vanburgh has arrived."

Mr. Lemarcham hurried out of the door. He was ready to set off on his round of visiting his patients.

"What's that, Damaris? Mr. Vanburgh has come? In his yacht! I must go down to receive him. Get my best coat, my dear, and be quick! It is most im-

portant I should be there soon. The vicar and I are the proper persons to welcome Mr. Vanburgh."

"What is that I hear? Mr. Vanburgh come?"

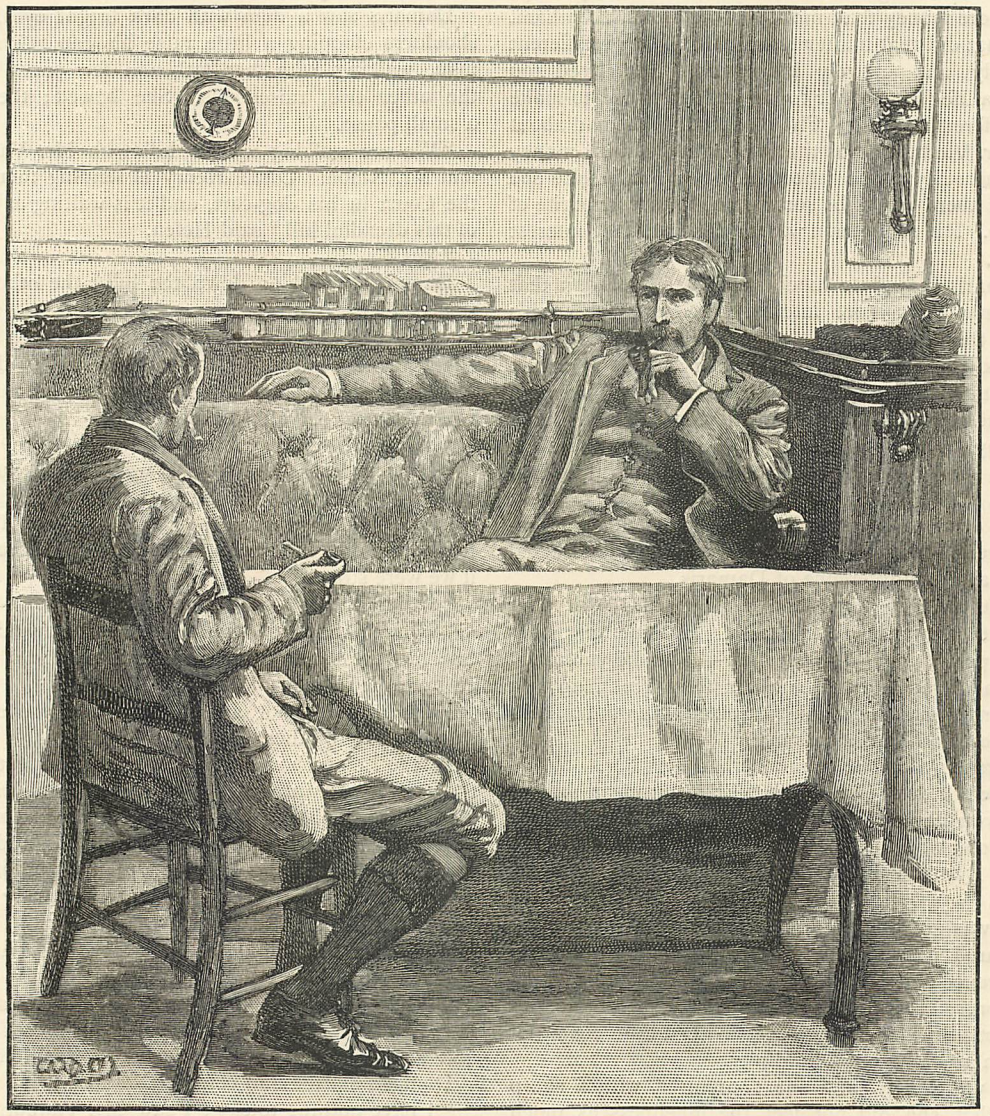
Helen stood in the doorway. The brilliant morning sun could find no blemish in that perfect face; her red lips smiled, and her bronze hair waved back from her forehead in the rough wind. Damaris thought her more beautiful, if that were possible, than when she first came to Trentham. The sea air and a rest from London life had heightened her healthy, glowing beauty, and rounded, more than Helen altogether liked, her full tall figure.

"Yes, his yacht is in, Damaris says. I am going down to meet him."

"I will come with you, Uncle."

Mrs. Lemarcham would have liked to accompany them, but Helen negatived the proposition.

"I shall bring Mr. Vanburgh back to lunch," she said. "You must stay at home and cook some little things, and be sure to have the table nicely decorated. Damaris will help you."



"EACH OCCUPIED WITH HIS OWN THOUGHTS" (*p.* 323).

Helen, in a becoming black hat and a sealskin coat that heightened the fairness of her complexion, walked down the street by her uncle's side.

"You must come and help me, Damaris, with this lunch. Helen's so particular, I should never dare set the table. You must pick the chrysanthemums in the greenhouse: that's all the flowers we've got, and Helen always will have flowers."

Mrs. Lemarcham always fell back on her step-

daughter's help in an emergency. She might worry and nag and scold Damaris, but she threw her burdens on her shoulders when she could.

The luncheon table was decorated by Damaris. That done, she put on her hat again, and prepared to start for Mr. Rushton's.

She had not the slightest curiosity to see Mr. Vanburgh. She imagined he was like other men, perhaps with more money than most, and he owned Trentham. But what did that matter to her? She was indifferent —utterly and entirely indifferent. She lived too lonely a life for a visitor to her father's house to make any difference to her. The one thought she had about this Mr. Vanburgh was that he might throw his money too generously to the fishermen. For Sam's sake she trusted there might be some sense in this favourite of fortune. His connection with Helen had little interest for her.

Damaris stayed to lunch with Mr. Rushton: that gentleman took more interest in Gerald Vanburgh's arrival than she did.

"I knew his father and mother: quite romantic their attachment was to one another. The Vanburgh husbands and wives are always devoted to one another, they say. Runs in the family. I wonder you did not wait to see Vanburgh. I believe I saw him once when he was a boy, but I am not sure."

Two or three times during the afternoon Mr. Rushton reverted to the subject. He became quite vexed at last at the indifference of Damaris.

"You are growing inhuman, Damaris, with your thoughts always above the earth. If something does not happen to you—a love affair—to shake you out of your indifference, or to be taken from Trentham into the world, you will grow into a detestable woman, self-absorbed, and hard as a stone."

He repented when he saw he had hurt her.

"There! there!" he said, "I did not mean that. I know you have a lot to put up with at home, and you are a good woman."

But Damaris knew there was truth in what he said.

She was growing hard: she felt it herself. Once she had cared passionately for her father, but years of indifference and injustice on his part had crushed the affection. Her friendship with Mr. Rushton was intellectual rather than heart-felt. Old Sam could not awaken anything but a kind pity.

She was lonely, and she recognised with a sharp pang that she did not feel the loneliness as much as she had formerly done. She was hardening, as Mr. Rushton said. The next instant she congratulated herself that it was so; it would save her much pain.

The day had turned a sullen grey. The clouds of the morning had spread over the sky, the colour was gone from the earth. The trees, the roads, the hedges, and fields were of a dismal, cold, colourless appearance. The wind had dropped, and a dead calm brooded over Trentham.

Damaris observed the change since the morning. A storm was coming; she hurried her steps to reach her father's house.

A sound of voices and steps came up the lane; her father, two strangers, and Helen met her.

"My daughter—Mr. Vanburgh, Mr. Nixon."

How Mr. Lemarcham wished that Helen were his daughter, not this pale woman, with a shabby black cloak thrown back from her shoulders, showing a shabbier blue serge frock, with gloveless hands, and a ribbonless hat pressed down on her brown hair.

Damaris saw a man with dark bright eyes, broad shoulders stooping a little, raise his cap. A smaller man, walking with her father a few paces behind the other two, raised his. She bowed; there was a small pause.

"We are walking up the hill with Mr. Vanburgh and Mr. Nixon. Uncle Henry is sending them on to the Court in his dog-cart, and it is waiting at the top of this dreadful hill," said Helen.

"Yes."

Damaris passed on down the hill; the others continued their way up.

"I say, Vanburgh, did you notice that Miss Lemarcham we were introduced to on the road?" said Harry Nixon that night, after dinner at Vanburgh Court. The two men were smoking in the library.

"What of her?"

"How queerly dressed she was—like a nun or a nurse, or something of the sort, in that long black cloak. A queer manner, too! Stood there and looked from one to the other of us with no more interest than if we were stones."

"I thought she looked sad."

"How in the name of fortune could you tell that? She has the same expression as the sphinx, and as easily to be read."

Vanburgh did not answer, and the conversation drifted away to other matters.

In the Lemarchams' house the talk was entirely of the arrival of Vanburgh. Mrs. Lemarcham discussed his clothes, his looks, his words; she could not weary of the subject; neither could her husband; and Helen did not dislike giving her quota of information about *her* friend, as she wished it to be emphatically understood was Gerald Vanburgh.

"Damaris sits like a stone, and never says a word," said her step-mother pettishly.

"What else could you expect from her?" said her father. "She never attempts to make herself agreeable at home, whatever she may do at Rushton's."

Damaris started and coloured.

"I have nothing to say; I saw Mr. Vanburgh only for one moment, you remember. I am not sure who is Mr. Vanburgh of the two men you introduced to me—the dark man or the fair?"

"The fair man is his secretary," said Helen. "I pretend to like him: Mr. Vanburgh thinks so much of him; but really I cannot bear him."

The next morning Vanburgh and Nixon arrived to escort the doctor's party to the yacht. Nothing had been said to Damaris about her going with them; Vanburgh had not known of her existence when he gave the invitation the day before.

As luck would have it, however, she was in the

dining-room when the two men arrived, and Sarah, with that gift for doing the wrong thing which distinguishes general servants, showed them into the dining-room. A fire was lighted in the drawing-room, and the chair-backs had been arranged by Mrs. Lemarcham expressly for their benefit. But Mrs. Lemarcham was upstairs, helping Helen to fasten a blue serge yachting costume, and Sarah could do the wrong thing undisturbed.

Damaris rose and shook hands.

"Mrs. Lemarcham and my cousin will be ready immediately. My father has already gone down to the pier."

"I hope you will come with us," said Vanburgh.

"I cannot, thank you."

She was seated with her face to the light. Vanburgh sat forward in the chair he had taken, twirling his cap between his fingers. He glanced up at her covertly once or twice as she answered Nixon's questions and remarks.

Harry bullied Vanburgh afterwards for not helping him to sustain the conversation with "the sphinx" for the ten minutes before Mrs. Lemarcham and Helen appeared.

They came at last: Helen radiant, smiling, wrapped up in a natty little pea-jacket, and wearing a smart little sailor hat, very different from Damaris' shabby sailor.

Damaris was slipping away in the general greeting that met their arrival. She was passing by Mr. Vanburgh when he spoke.

"I am sorry you cannot come with us to-day," he said.

She glanced up (surprised to hear anyone say he was sorry to lose her company) to meet his dark eyes.

"Are you?" she said stupidly; then recovering herself: "I have something I must do this morning."

She laughed at herself when she found that she was actually blushing.

The "something she must do that morning" was to find and reprove old Sam. As she feared, the fishermen of Trentham had been too generously treated by Vanburgh, and the preceding day had passed in drinking.

A dilapidated, shaken Sam was leaning against the door when she arrived at his cottage.

"You will kill yourself, Sam, if you do not stop drinking," she said solemnly, standing before him with the air of a convicting judge.

Sam wept and trembled before this stern young woman. She looked at him with a feeling of helplessness: he was such a wreck. It appeared out of her power to keep him altogether from drinking, but at least she could retard his downward course.

"Come with me," she said.

Remorselessly she dragged him past the public-house down the street, to the sea.

"Bain't 'ee comin' for a drink at the 'Three Jolly Fisher-boys?'" sang out a rough man from the doorway of that public-house; "there's still summat left from yesterday."

Sam looked back with longing eyes, but in his shattered state of mind and body he had not strength to break away from his determined young mistress. She made him get into his boat, and followed him.

"We are going to Lynscombe," she said. "We will get something to eat at Mrs. Cook's, and come back in the afternoon."

By that time she judged the money would be finished.

"'Tis so cold, Miss," whined Sam.

But cold was better for him than the "Three Jolly Fisher-boys," Damaris thought, and they were soon sailing in the direction of Lynscombe.

Mrs. Cook lived in the ruined mill. "Mother Cook," as she was called at Trentham, made her living by providing tea for the pic-nic parties that visited Lynscombe. She was a very old woman, lame and deformed, with a temper as crooked as her body. In the summer she kept a girl to help her, but in winter, when no one came to Lynscombe, she sent the girl away, and lived alone. A store of firewood and flour was kept by her in the ruins of the tumble-down mill, and on this she would depend for food and warmth through the winter months, never coming into Trentham unless she was absolutely obliged, and rarely visited by the fishermen. She was disliked for her temper, and feared because in popular opinion she looked so like a witch.

Old Sam and she, however, were friendly. Sam said that she was his cousin, but probably a common sense of misfortune drew them together. The old man with his imbecility, and the old woman with her deformity, were not as other folk, and knew it.

Mother Cook was not pleased to see them to-day. She expected no one after the last day of October; her help was gone, and she had to bestir herself to give Damaris and Sam something to eat. Probably for no one else but Sam would she have brought out her bread and cheese, but old Sam was privileged, and she only grumbled.

"I can see 'ee 've been drinkin' agen," she said curtly to Sam; "there's death in yer face!" she added, more cheerfully.

Sam munched his bread and cheese with a stolid disregard of her prophecies.

She sat on a stool, crouching over the wood fire on the open hearth.

The small window was nearly covered by an old sack, which Mother Cook had nailed up to keep out the draught. The bright fire gleamed on her white hair and eyebrows as she bent over to throw on a fresh stick. Her dull sunken eyes, withered features, and claw-like hands gave her a malignant, witch-like appearance. She peered round at Sam seated at the table, from him to Damaris, standing by the window.

"I see'd Trevarthick t'other day," she said, looking over her shoulder at Damaris, "he 'th got trouble in his face. I see'd his coffin in the ashes."

She poked the burning wood with a broken broom-handle which served for a poker, and chuckled to herself.

The small room was stifling, with the large fire and want of fresh air. All chinks and holes were filled

"'STOP! YOU HAVE SAID ENOUGH'" (*p.* 331).

with sacking and straw. Mother Cook had a violent antipathy to fresh air: her window was never opened. It was nailed down. The room was scrupulously clean. The whitewashed walls were blackened by smoke from the open hearth, but the blue slate floor was well brushed, and the table and chair well scrubbed. Mother Cook herself was cleaner than most old village women. She wore no cap, but her white hair was thick and silvery-looking. Her shaggy eyebrows stood out from her face with a fierce effect; they were white as her hair: the white that only very black hair and eyebrows turn. Her dark complexion, large head, and misshapen body made an ideal witch for the country mind.

Damaris looked from Sam, stolidly eating his bread and cheese (the sail had given him an appetite), to the old creature cowering over the fire. What a picture the cottage interior made! The gleams of fire on the walls, the woman's white head and deformed body in light, and old Sam in shadow.

"What was 'ee doin' t'other night on Cliff?" said the old woman suddenly to Sam.

Sam dropped the piece of bread he was gnawing.

"What do 'ee mane?"

"T'other night—Toosday, I belave 'twas—you was up on Cliff.'

"I wasn't."

"You was: I see'd 'ee."

Sam looked slyly at Damaris, to see whether she was listening. She had heard every word.

"'Twarnt me," he said sullenly. "You can't see."

"I tell 'ee 'twas you."

"Were you on Cliff, Mrs. Cook?" asked Damaris.

"I'se sure. I'd been up to Trevarthick's for the drop o' milk they promised me."

There was an easy road to Jim Trevarthick's farm round the hills, but Mrs. Cook, in spite of her age and deformity, preferred to climb the steep side of Cliff, which made the almost perpendicular slope of one side of the shut-in valley where she lived. The smooth slippery grass of the hill-side was difficult to mount, but the deformed woman was proud of her activity. Since she had lived at Lynscombe she had taken this shorter way to Trentham and Trevarthick's farm rather than the longer way by the road. She would not give in to the infirmity of old age, and still toiled up the slippery side of the hill.

"What was Sam doing there?"

Mother Cook looked at the old man, and perhaps a glance of warning to hold her tongue passed from him to her. Anyhow, a sudden attack of deafness came upon her.

"What do 'ee say, Miss?"

Damaris repeated the question.

"I can't hear 'ee: but it don't matter. It couldn't have been 'ee, Sam, as 'ee says 'twarn't. Have 'ee finished?"

The old woman could be got to say nothing more; and Sam, when cross-examined, would only declare sullenly, "'Twarn't me Mother Cook see'd on Cliff."

But Damaris was convinced that somewhere on Cliff—among the granite rocks which pushed their way through the thin soil—Sam hid his savings.

It was delightful to step from the close dark cottage into the bright, cold November afternoon.

Damaris saw with pleasure when they passed the "Three Jolly Fisher-boys," on their return, that the public-house was deserted. Mr. Vanburgh's money was spent, and she could reckon on Sam being safe for the rest of the day, or until Mr. Vanburgh should toss more silver to the fishermen. Sam would not spend his own money until he had saved enough to give him a week's or fortnight's drinking bout. Damaris knew there had not been a long enough time since his last attack for him to have saved the smallest sum he considered necessary.

She left him at the door of his cottage, and walked home.

The sound of tea-cups and the laugh of a man announced the return of the yachting party. Damaris intended going to her own room; she did not open the door of the drawing-room, where they were assembled, but her step-mother's voice in raised tones called her.

"Here's Damaris: she'll tell you. Damaris! Damaris!"

Unwillingly Damaris turned back, and entered the room. Vanburgh and Nixon rose to their feet when she entered, and Vanburgh, the nearest, offered her his chair. She shook her head with a murmured "No, thanks!" and stood cold and silent, waiting for her step-mother to speak. Helen was leaning back in an arm-chair, her hat thrown off, frowning. Mr. Lemarcham looked ill at ease, and Mrs. Lemarcham had the excited manner and the wicked sparkle in her black eyes which warned Damaris that her step-mother was on malicious mischief bent.

"We want to know what is Jim Trevarthick's attraction that all the girls and old maids are mad about him?" she asked, with a glance at the others to enjoy the joke. "We know *you* can tell us, Damaris."

"If there is an attraction, I do not know it," said Damaris steadily.

Mrs. Lemarcham winked at Gerald Vanburgh, but his face was impassible: his eyes were fixed on the wall behind her.

"Come now, Damaris, don't get on the high horse. We all know you can see the attraction in Jim, pretend what you like."

"I have known Mr. Trevarthick many years," Damaris said calmly. "I should prefer not to discuss him before——"—she hesitated, and Vanburgh turned and looked at her—"before Mr. Vanburgh and Mr. Nixon, whom I only met yesterday."

She opened the door and left the room.

But her heart was beating wildly. She was more angry than she had felt for years. Her step-mother's innuendos and out-spoken taunts were usually treated by her with serene indifference, but to-day for some reason she was touched to the quick. Her fear of the day before that she was outliving her feelings was needless. The storm of anger which held her for a time after that short scene in the drawing-room was a sufficient refutation.

But her face and voice had shown nothing.

"La! Did you ever see such barefaced coolness?" said Mrs. Lemarcham when Damaris closed the door behind her.

No one answered. An awkward pause ensued, which Helen broke by inquiring of Vanburgh about his travels.

They would not stay to dinner. Vanburgh curtly refused Mrs. Lemarcham's invitation.

When they were gone, and Mr. Lemarcham had left the room to smoke in the small conservatory, Helen attacked her aunt.

"You disgusted Mr. Vanburgh by attacking Damaris about Jim Trevarthick as you did. You will ruin my prospects if you go on like that. He will throw me over if you show yourself as—as vulgar as you were this afternoon. I saw by his face what he felt. He is the sort of man never to come to the house again."

A quick retort was on Polly Lemarcham's lips, but she quailed before Helen's look.

"I must marry him!" continued Helen, walking up and down the small space of room between tables and chairs; "things are getting desperate. That fool of a Fanny Hastings let Madame Lester and one or two other tradespeople have my address. I had half-a-dozen letters from them this morning."

"I saw you had a good many."

Helen confronted Mrs. Lemarcham.

"You must keep in the background when Mr. Vanburgh is here," she said resolutely. "If I do not

marry him I shall have to ask uncle to lend me the money to pay my bills: and I shall get it from him, you know. You must keep that tongue of yours in order. What was the use of baiting Damaris in the way you did before them all? I know you will find it difficult to efface yourself, but it must be done. Besides, if I marry him I shall be able to give you my dresses and hats; I shall never wear them more than three times or so."

Mrs. Lemarcham cowered before her husband's niece. Her beauty, dress, and manner of the world subjugated Polly Lemarcham, and Helen, quick to perceive her advantage and seize it, had trodden on her and treated her as a *confidante* by turns. It is not too much to say that at the end of three months Helen could make Mrs. Lemarcham do almost what she pleased.

Mrs. Lemarcham was a bully, and, like many bullies, in her heart a coward. To her step-daughter she could say what she pleased—Damaris never retorted with a cutting speech; but to Helen she simply dared not, supposing she had wished. Mrs. Lemarcham was fully aware that nothing, no respect for her uncle, no regard for appearances, would stand in Helen's way when she wished to avenge a slight. She was afraid of Helen, yet she admired her, and she liked to be given the odds and ends that Helen threw away as finished with, when, to Polly's frugal village mind, they appeared hardly worn.

She was frightened into promising to be silent before Mr. Vanburgh, or, at any rate, to be as quiet as possible. But she did not believe that a man could be anything but amused with what she considered her witty jests.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

"HOW THEY TALK IN THE LITTLE TOWN BELOW!"

THE following day Damaris was returning from a walk on the cliffs. Near the village Gerald Vanburgh joined her.

He was on his way to Trentham Quay, and their road lay together as far as her father's house.

Above the village they came upon a curious scene.

Sam Burrowes lay in the road-side, surrounded by a group of boys and youths. From the condition of his clothes, he must have been rolling in the muddy roads. His hat was gone, a silly smile was on his face; he shook his finger at the boys with a foolish laugh. Two youths threw handfuls of mud at him; he looked down vacantly at the place where the mud struck him, and laughed again.

"Sam!"

"He 'th drunk, Miss," said one of the boys.

Sam, caught by his young mistress, crept nearer to the hedge, and buried his face in the moss and ferns.

The small mob yelled with delight, and a few more handfuls of mud adorned his coat.

"Stop that, boys!" said Vanburgh.

"He saith he 'th a'goin' to hide his money, Miss. Mr. Vanburgh, he 'th a gived 'un some, and he 'aint a-spent it all."

"And you were following him to steal it!" said Damaris sternly.

Some of the boys looked sheepish, and slunk away. The braver spirits waited, in the hope of getting more sport when Sam's protectors were gone.

Damaris looked down with knit brows at the old man's prostrate form. Sam peered round to see what the silence meant, and Vanburgh choked with laughter at the guilty discovered look on the old man's face.

"It is nothing to laugh at," said Damaris drily.

"Forgive me. But he gave me such a comical look, he——"

"He is killing himself," said Damaris shortly. "Sam," she continued more gently, "stand up. You will be ill again if you lie here longer."

But it was evident that Sam had not sufficient command over his legs to stand upon them without help.

The older and bigger boys moved away, and only a few of the smaller ones remained to watch the fun. They doubled themselves up with laughter at Sam's efforts. Vanburgh took his arm and steadied him.

"Thank'ee, sir," said Sam. "My legs be a-shakin' tremenjous to-day."

"Do not hold him, Mr. Vanburgh."

Some reason she could not define made Damaris dislike seeing Vanburgh's coat-sleeve touch old Sam's muddy clothes.

"What is to be done with him?"

Sam had fallen back against the hedge; he looked at Damaris with a deprecating smile, like a child who knows he has been naughty.

"He looks ill, poor old chap!" said Vanburgh, noticing the sunken eyes and pinched features of the old man.

"We must get him to his house," said Damaris. "It is so cold, and he has not long recovered from an illness."

Vanburgh wondered ruefully whether he should have to arm this drunken, muddy fisherman to his cottage; yet he felt that if this very earnest, not to say tragic, young woman demanded it of him, he could not disappoint her.

"Whativer be 'ee a-doin' of here, Dicky?"

The voice was that of Mrs. Treleven, the leader of public opinion and the virago of Trentham; she was looking for her youngest hope, Dicky.

On seeing her landlord, Mr. Vanburgh, she dropped a curtsey, and her manner changed. She modulated her rough voice, and twitched her gown straight.

"What be the matter, sir? Ah! 'tis that drunken rapscallion, old Sam."

She elbowed her way roughly past Damaris, and faced the old man.

"What be 'ee a troublin' the gentlefolks for, you old rascal?" she demanded.

Sam shrank away, and a look of fear came into his vacant face. He knew and feared Mrs. Treleven.

Damaris saw the expression on his face.

"Leave him alone, Mrs. Treleven," she said; "you frighten him."

"Shall I take 'un to his cottage, sir?"

Mrs. Treleven showed her dislike to Damaris by ignoring her; she asked Mr. Vanburgh for his orders.

"You will not take him," said Damaris calmly. "He is afraid of you. If there is no other way, I will help him myself."

"If you will not allow Mrs. Treleven to help, I shall have to do it," said Vanburgh, with a groan; "and he certainly is remarkably dirty. Now, Mrs. Treleven and he are nearly a match in that respect," in a lower tone.

Damaris shook her head.

"She is a cruel woman! He shall not go with her."

Dicky's howls at the cuffing his mother was giving him corroborated her words.

"Well, here goes, then!" said Vanburgh, advancing towards Sam, who was beginning to nod, from the mingled effects of his potations and the cold November air.

But chance deprived Vanburgh of the pleasure of supporting Sam to his home. A cart came rattling down the road, and Damaris knew the man who drove.

"Yeo, stop! Are you going down to the quay?"

He was not going further than the village, but a word from Vanburgh and something that passed between them changed his mind. He would take Sam Burrowes to his cottage, if that was what they wanted. Between the driver and Mrs. Treleven, Sam was hoisted into the cart.

"That is your doing," said Damaris bitterly, when the cart had rattled down the hill and turned the corner.

She forgot that Mr. Vanburgh was almost a stranger, —that she had met him for the first time the day before yesterday. In her anger she only remembered that it was his money that had brought upon her old favourite this humiliation.

"*My* doing!"

"Yes, yours. You give them money; you never think; you throw it about, and this is the consequence. Sam is not the only ——"

"I am sorry if ——"

"Sorry! what is the use of being *sorry?*"

Mrs. Treleven followed behind, listening to their words.

Damaris, with heightened colour, hurried her steps.

"I never thought that the money I gave them was spent in this way. They were all so obliging and pleased to see me: and, to tell the truth, I felt rather guilty for not having been here so long, and altogether ——. Perhaps, when I come to think of it, I did give the fishermen too much."

"You certainly did."

"Her'll try and stop 'un giving us money," said to herself the listener behind.

"To give the fishermen money is to ruin them," continued Damaris earnestly; the indifference customary to her dropped like a garment. "I ought not to have spoken to you as I did just now. You could not know the harm you were doing, but in future——"

"Don't 'ee belave her, sir," interrupted Mrs. Treleven, her temper overcoming her prudence; "don't 'ee belave her. 'Tis lies, all lies, her's a' tellin 'ee. Her hates us; her's only tryin' to do us a bad turn."

Damaris and Vanburgh had stopped, and were facing the virago. Her coarse red face was purple with passion, her voice risen to a scream.

"Don't 'ee be stopped from givin' us poor folks money by the likes of her. Her don't like us, sir; her's that mean herself, her tries to make others like her. Us knows 'ee, Miss"—she turned upon Damaris—"us knows yer ways. You needn't think 'ee 'll get over Trentham folk. Us 'll remember this, I can——"

"Stop!" said Vanburgh.

The woman's torrent of words had overwhelmed him for a second.

"Stop! You have said enough. Now you may go."

Before his look and words she dared say no more. Reluctantly she went before them down the hill, muttering threats at Damaris as she passed.

The fishermen of Trentham soon learnt what Mrs. Treleven had heard; nor did she confine herself to the truth. In Mrs. Treleven's version of what had passed Damaris was made to say much against the fishermen, besides extorting from Mr. Vanburgh a promise that he would give no more money to them.

The ill-feeling grew deeper in the village against Damaris.

"I do not admire Trentham manners," said Vanburgh, when the woman was out of sight.

Damaris had become her cool, indifferent self. She wondered and regretted that excitement had made her say what she had to Vanburgh.

"You must not take Mrs. Treleven for a fair specimen of our villagers. She is the worst of them."

"I hope so."

"But she has her good points. She will do anything for her children—though she did beat Dicky just now," seeing a smile on Vanburgh's lips.

"She seems a dangerous woman."

Damaris met his eyes with a smile.

"You mean because she threatened me? You must not think anything of that. I am not liked in Trentham: I do not know why; and Mrs. Treleven dislikes me more than the other people do."

He checked the words that rose to his lips.

"Helen is very popular," continued Damaris, with a slight smile; "the village is delighted with her."

"Miss Desborough? yes, she is popular everywhere."

They parted at her father's house.

Damaris that evening could not keep her attention fixed on the book she tried to read. Was it because of the excitement of the afternoon; or was there some other reason? She assured herself that Mrs. Treleven was the cause of her unrest, and she fell to wondering why that woman disliked her.

A lump rose in her throat; why did no one care for her? She choked it back bravely. Herself must be to blame: there must be a want of loveableness about her, for why should the villagers, why should Mrs Treleven, dislike her when she towards them felt only liking?

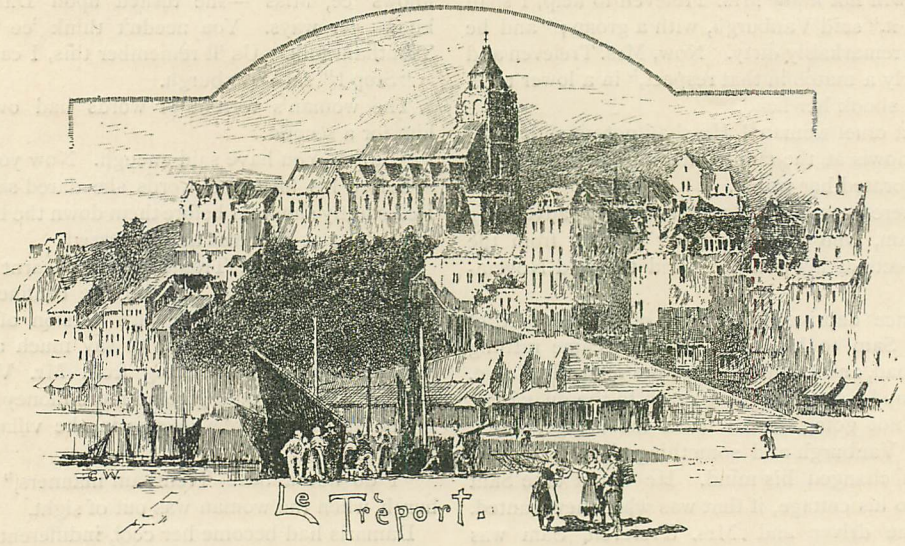
Little did Damaris dream in what way Trentham was to show its distrust.

END OF CHAPTER THE NINTH.

IN PICARDY AND ARTOIS.

AN EASY CONTINENTAL TRIP.

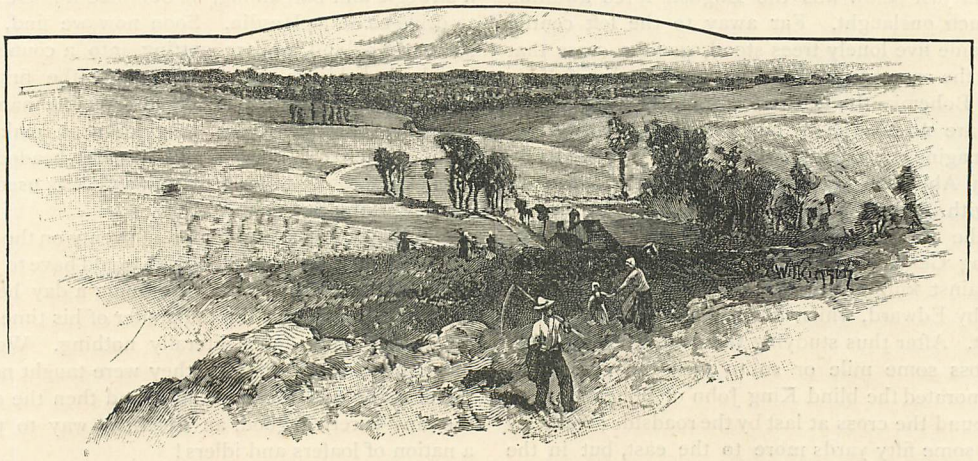
BY JAMES BAKER, F.R.G.S., AUTHOR OF "JOHN WESTACOTT," "BY THE WESTERN SEA," ETC.



The easy trip of which this article speaks is through a country that is full of reminiscences of the English and Spanish occupation of the north of France, but in a district that is but little visited by the crowds of our fellow-countrymen who daily invade Paris. A great part of the journey will have to be done either by driving or on foot; but the driving need not arouse a fear that such a journey can scarcely be "easy" for the pocket, for if two or three travel together, a trap or carriage can generally be obtained for about ten francs a day or journey, and this expense is more than saved by the cheapness of the living in these interesting but unvisited districts.

We make Treport our starting point. To gain this, the steamer must be taken to Dieppe, unless, for love of adventure, passage be taken on some trading or fishing-boat to the picturesque and bright little port. The new part of the town, with casino and bathing establishment, lies under the white and yellow cliffs, and the old port stretches up the harbour, with sloping green hills on either hand, and with the old church high up on a rocky perch, dominating the grey houses of the fisher-folk beneath. The peasants are still picturesque, in their red petticoats and white caps, and the life in the harbour, with its crowd of fishing-boats gives an interesting study. A climb up the steps to the Church of St. James allows a good look-out over the whole town, and a curious thing here is that the pathway passes under the west porch of the church, from one part of the town to the other; and this shelter forms a comfortable resort for beggars, blind and halt. The church is interesting, especially the roof, which is groined, with pendants hanging from the keystones or bosses.

To the economic may be recommended passing the night at Eu, instead of in Treport. Here the seat—but they are not allowed to live here—of the Orleans family can be seen, from the outside: for a polite *concierge* in blue livery absolutely refuses, by strict orders, to open the gates of the château. But in Eu there is much else to be seen. The Church of St. Laurence, of exceptionally fine late Early English style, is full of interest architecturally and historically, and a visit to the well-kept crypt should not be omitted, for here are some well-preserved excellent monuments, though revolutionary ravages have scarred and hacked some of them; and as a satire upon human greatness, after reading a list of honours of one of the counts, a trap-door is raised, and beneath is seen a pile of human bones—all that is left of generations of princes whose remains were scattered broadcast by enraged plebeians, here to be gathered in a mingled, unnamed heap. The statue to Charles d'Artois—he who was taken on the battlefield of Agincourt—especially interests us in this journey. The Chapelle du Collège, on the other side of the square, contains some most carefully-executed monuments of Henry de Guise and others, and should be seen.



THE FIELD OF CRECY.

From Eu to Abbeville is but a short run by rail. We happened to enter this town late in the evening, just as the great manœuvres were going on not far from the Prussian frontier at Courtrai and Bar-le-Duc. The town was very quiet, but going into a café, that was somewhat brilliant with light, and chatting with the waiter, he began to tell us about these manœuvres. High up in the sky we saw a light in the dark; we could not make out whence it came; but we learnt it was the watchman in the cathedral tower, who had to watch for fire, and blow his horn to give the signal of the hour to prove he was awake. We had heard the sentry call in Greece to his comrades as he paced his rounds: "Sentry, be awake!" and in the old mediæval town of Prachatic, in Bohemia, had heard the watchman's curious whistle of the hours: a relic of the old days, when the town was ever in the midst of border strife; but we were curious to hear this survival of old times so near England; and in the silent night, hours after, the unusual sound of the horn awoke us, as the watchman told from his lonely height that "all was well."

The cathedral at Abbeville has suffered terribly from faulty foundations. The great tower is good work, and the west front exceedingly rich—a mass of delicate decorations. In the square of Abbeville is a brand new marble statue to Admiral Courbet; but probably nothing would give one a more striking illustration of how low art has fallen in France of to-day.

There is not much in Abbeville to detain one, and we were not sorry when we had procured a vehicle to carry us onward to Crecy. We had some little difficulty about this, for with that strange disregard of the suffering of animals which the French cannot understand as cruelty, the first horse that was brought us was bleeding from several sores. We refused to go with such an animal, and after a noisy argument we were taken to the Grande Place, and given another; but the drivers were astonished when told in England they would be taxed or fined for such cruelty.

Soon we were beyond the outskirts of little Abbeville, and were passing a wood with marks stuck up on it, showing where soon a rail will run to historic Crecy. Our driver was a great *revengeist*—to coin a word—and said he was ready to go at once to war. What was the good? there was no trade, no money to be got; it wanted a good war to kill off a lot of people; the women would go this time. Prussia would be crushed! So the French talked in 1870.

After a couple of hours' drive, we passed across a wide open plain, and ahead of us, hidden in a hollow and surrounded by trees, lay Crecy. We put up at the suggestive sign of the "Golden Cannon" (Canon d'Or), and soon started out to get a sight of the battle-field where our Black Prince won his spurs. Guide-books said the field and the famous windmill where Edward stood was to the west of the *hamlet*, which said hamlet we found to be a town of 2,000 inhabitants, but as the information seemed vague, we went down to the church, an interesting, partly flamboyant building, and there we had a chat with the curé, who gave us the disheartening news that the windmill that all the guide-books said still stood had been lately pulled down, but he gave us directions how to find the field and the mound on which the mill had stood; and going *east* of the *town* instead of west of the village, we came up a slight hill, and an old grey-beard coming out of a cottage, we asked him to point us out the field. The old fellow knew the ground, and pointed us out the great mound, up which we clambered. There was the circular hole where the mill had stood, and part of its foundations lying scattered about, of lime, and brick, and stone. We knew now we could look rightly on the battle plain, and turning our faces south-eastward, we saw (for it was in the afternoon, as when the battle commenced) how the Genoese bowmen had the hot August sun in their eyes. They were

coming as it were towards us. Down on the undulating plain just below was the English force awaiting the French onslaught. Far away to the left centre, where some five lonely trees stood, was the cross that marked the spot where, from the dead body of King John of Bohemia the feathers and motto were picked up that are now borne by our Prince of Wales. We could imagine the great mass of French troops coming up from Abbeville across to the south, and the air thick with flights of grey goose-quills—the *mêlées* where the French men-at-arms attacked their own retreating Genoese—the clash of swords and battle-axes against knightly armour; all watched from this mound by Edward, whilst his son was in the thick of the fight. After thus studying the field, we went down and across some mile or so to seek the cross that commemorated the blind King John of Bohemia.

We found the cross at last by the roadside; formerly it stood some fifty yards more to the east, but in the field and in the way of culture, so it was moved to the present spot. It is a weather-worn stone cross, some four feet high, one of the arms broken, the other almost perfect, but rounded by five and a half centuries of time. The sun was setting in the most lovely hues as we halted here, and looked round the battle-field, but little altered probably since that memorable night when so many dead and wounded lay stretched on this fatal plain.

In returning to Crecy, we passed by the new railway station which is built, though the trees are not yet even cut down in the forest through which the rail is coming. We had asked the old peasant why they destroyed the windmill. "Because we have a republic," he answered, "that destroys everything." As a fact, the mill was destroyed by a man, the owner, out of spite, because they would not elect him a Mayor of Crecy. He built a garden wall with the stones.

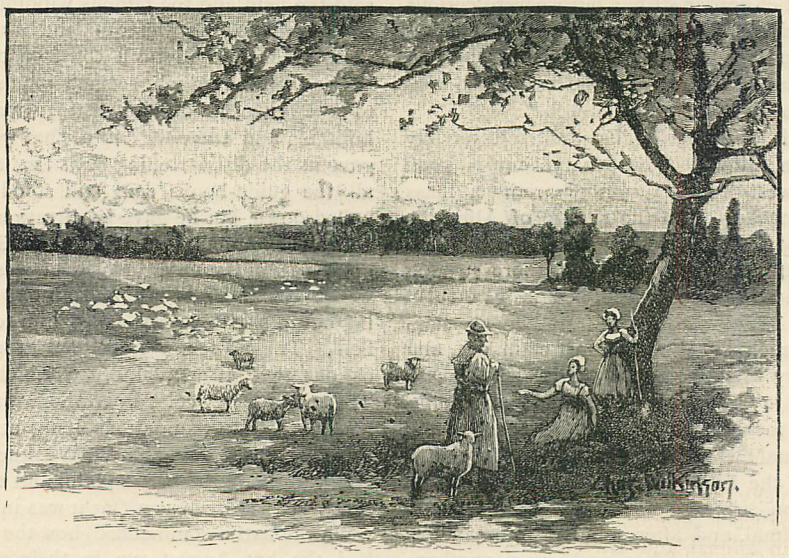
We had some difficulty in getting away from Crecy; all the horses were engaged in harvest work, but after a struggle and bargaining, we obtained a horse and gig to drive us on to Hesdin. Soon now we find, though so near England, we are getting into a country that has been held by the Spanish. At the first great village we near, called Estery le Crecy, a name that perchance has deceived the guide-book makers, we found a rich old church, and a white-headed priest tells us the tower was destroyed, as it was used as an outlook in the Spanish wars.

Our driver was a young man of twenty on the coming 1st of January, and on that day he would have to join the army for three years. For five hours a day he would have to exercise, and the remainder of his time he had for loafing and doing literally nothing. We asked him if he learnt nothing, if they were taught nothing; the exercise was the sole thing, and then the cabaret, the inn—surely a good, an excellent way to produce a nation of loafers and idlers!

On arriving in Hesdin, we found it *en fête;* it was the *Ducasse*, we were told, which was explained as the Kermesse—two words, neither of them French; but it was as our annual pleasure fair: games, such as climbing the pole, sack and barrel races.

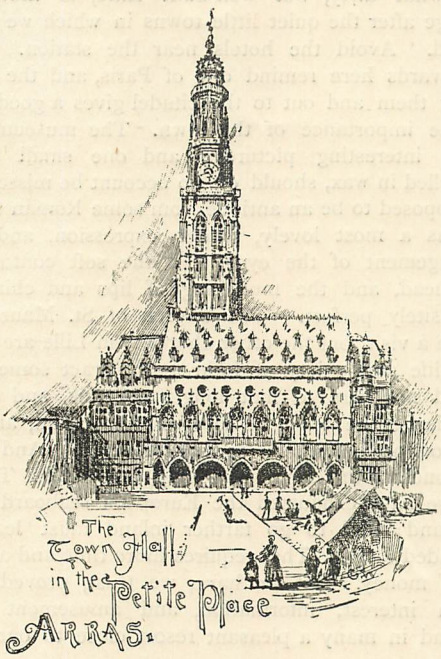
In Hesdin itself we heard of a place called Viel Hesdin, formerly an old walled town, but now a village, with ruins of a fine old castle, the walls still left here and there to tell of its ancient greatness. The hotel we stayed at in Hesdin was an old château, and one part of it is a tower built by the Spaniards during their long occupation. The Hôtel de Ville is interesting, and shows we are nearing Flanders by its belfry rising above an arched Jacobean portico.

But Hesdin must not detain us long, with a day before us on the field of Agincourt. We had less trouble in getting a conveyance for Fruges, taking Agincourt *en route*. Our driver was again of a different type. We had had the man approaching middle-



ON THE FIELD OF AGINCOURT.

age, anxious for war; and we had had the young man looking forward, not with joy, to three years of exercise and idleness; and now we had an old man who knew what war meant. He had been wounded in the



leg at Reichshofen; but his life had been spared him. As we drove on up a lonely road, and then through a pleasant forest, we soon became friendly, and he pointed out the villages to us, and told us their names. Some seven kilomètres from Fruges we gained a high plain, and away to the right, hidden amongst a wood, we saw rising above the trees the spire of Agincourt. It was an errand of discovery we were upon; for our guide-books said naught of anything to be seen; so we halted at the village inn opposite the church, and went to get some information. Here we learnt from a passing stranger that in 1832 the English had dug on the field, and had found a lot of arms, and they were in *the* museum in London—which museum he could not say, but he had seen them. We crossed over to the church, and found it very interesting.

Much might be said on this church, its quaint font, and carvings, but we must move on up the deep, tree-shadowed lane, and on to the plain, to the east of the village; and then as we cross it towards the wood beyond, we halt and face southwards, having the village lying in a wooded hollow on our right, for we are now in about the centre of the battle-field of Agincourt. The wood that hides the village stretches up on to the plain. Then there is a wide open field running north and south; and beyond, to the south, is another wood, with an opening on the right hand to the south-west towards Hesdin; and on the extreme left eastwards is another wood, a small round one. Now, although it is nearly five hundred years since Agincourt was fought, this tallies with the description of the battle-field as it then was; but, were we on the field? We did not know. We had no proof, and had not learnt there was any trace left of it. But we crossed the plain on foot, and came to a cottage at a cross-road, and into this we went to make inquiries if there were not some tradition, some recollection, if only of the Englishmen digging in 1832. If so, where had they dug? An old man and his dame were in the cottage, and soon were interested in us. "It was earlier than '32," said the dame. "Not so," said the man. "But," said she, "my father was three years old when they dug, and his father was a soldier of Napoleon." She had Napoleon's medal to prove her statement, which we afterwards worked out to give the date 1816. She brought us that last medal Napoleon sent his soldiers from St. Helena. To Godefroi Jean Baptiste the medal had been given, and it had on it this legend: "Campagne de 1792 à 1815, À ses compagnons de Gloire sa dernière pensée. St. Helène, 5 Mai, 1821."

Interesting was this talk; but we wanted to go farther back in history, and positively trace Agincourt. "Was there any trace?" "Have you seen the cross?" asked the old lady. "No, what cross?" "Where they were all buried." "No; is there one?" "Yes, there, where it is enclosed," and she pointed onwards to the north, where was a square enclosure of a hedge, with many trees. We left the old dame with many thanks, and on gaining the enclosure, saw a high cross upon a great stone, with the date "25 Octobre, 1415," upon it: four hundred years before that same 1815 we had just heard of. A long inscription followed, commencing: "It is here that our valiant warriors have succumbed." Now we again looked out over the field, for we were sure we were upon the very centre of the battle-plain. All was calm and peaceful, and the soft wind gently swayed the leaves in this group of trees, that sheltered some of those who fell at Agincourt.

Our road now ran northwards, and the first village was called Ruisseauxville—the Town of Streams: because, says local tradition, the blood ran there in streams on that fatal day. But we were now *en route* for Fruges. "Ah!" said our old driver as we passed, "France always has war! Every generation sees it. I have the memory of it; and my sons will see it, for already they talk of it."

We found Fruges one of the old wide, open place, straggling market towns. In the great open square near the post some children were playing soldiers with drums and wooden swords. So the child is taught the glamour of war, and the fierce horror of the reality is left untaught. Lower down in the town we found an old-fashioned comfortable country inn, where we were excellently served for a very small sum. The train we were to get on to Arras with, only ran about twice a day; and when it did come we found it was of the New Republic type, which means that everyone has had a picking out of all contracts. The carriages were of matchwood.

and thin iron plates, no cushions and little paint, and that terribly dirty. The rails waved along the line like a serpent; and when we got away, the swaying and jolting and jumping threatened destruction every minute. That same week, two if not three trains went off the lines in France. But at length we arrived at Arras, and happened to alight at a big but as dirty an hotel as it would be possible to find. In the morning, however, we were much interested in the town itself, for we found we were in a thoroughly Spanish town: great open squares, the houses suggesting Flemish architecture; but all round the square were the overhanging arcades and pillared arches that form a cool walk in the hot southern towns.

The Petite Place is exceptionally picturesque, and on its north side stood the rich Renaissance town-hall, surmounted by a graceful tower somewhat like that of Antwerp Cathedral, though smaller. The Spaniards held this town until the seventeenth century, and it was not really under French rule until 1640. The Grande Place is a more important square in size, with the same arcadings, but not so picturesque a whole. It was in this town that the peace was signed after the battle of Agincourt, so, though our history now dealt with the domination of the Flemish to the hated Spanish race, yet we had not left all trace of the earlier fifteenth century history connected with England. There is a most interesting museum and picture-gallery in Arras, and surrounding it a charming garden with fountains, a spot that was a relief after the dirty dinginess of our hotel. The cathedral, a late classic building, has some one or two pictures of interest in it. But our space is exhausted, and we have but room for a passing note on Lille and Calais that end this historic trip. Busy, crowded, somewhat dirty, but well-built Lille, is indeed a change after the quiet little towns in which we have halted. Avoid the hotels near the station. The boulevards here remind one of Paris, and the walk along them and out to the citadel gives a good idea of the importance of the town. The museum has some interesting pictures; and one small head, modelled in wax, should on no account be missed: it is supposed to be an antique from some Roman tomb. It has a most lovely, tender expression, and the management of the eyes, and the soft contour of the head, and the modelling of lips and chin are exquisitely perfect. The Church of St. Maurice is worth a visit, but the other churches in Lille are poor. The life and gaiety of Lille may attract some who would not care to halt long in Calais, and these can leave the town as late as 10.45 p.m., and be in London before six in the morning. And here we conclude this series of "Easy Continental Trips," for we have exhausted the European seaboard near England; and to go farther inland must lead to extended tours. That requires more time and a little more money. But we have, we trust, proved that much interest, information, and amusement may be had in many a pleasant resort close to our own shores.

A TRIPLET OF INDIAN TALES.

I.—THE FARMER AND THE TIGER.

"BUT you will come back, won't you? I am really so hungry."

This was said by the tiger in quite plaintive tones, and to my wonder the man replied almost indignantly—

"I never told a lie in my life, and if I say I will, I will, and you can trust me."

I was watching the whole scene, though, for some reason or other, I was not able to do anything. It may have been that I was so interested in what was going on that I was unable to move.

I knew this farmer perfectly well. His name was Biloch Khan. He lived in a country where there was a river, and by the river there was a jungle, and then beyond the jungle were the farmer's field and his cottage. In the cottage, which must have been half-a-mile distant from the border of the jungle, were his wife, whose name was Fatima, and his two children—a boy and a girl.

This afternoon Biloch Khan had gone out early to look at his crops, and as he was walking through the field nearest the jungle a voice called out familiarly from the thicket—

"Welcome, Bill! Give me the news."

Though it was the tiger that spoke, the farmer seemed in no way disconcerted, but replied in a matter-of-course sort of way—

"I am well; my wife and children are well; I came out to see my crops: they are looking well; I hope you are well; all else is well."

"Heaven bless you all!" replied the tiger.

"Now you tell me your news," said Biloch Khan.

"I am well; I came up from the river this afternoon; as I felt hungry, I determined to lie in wait here for you; now I have found you, and am going to eat you. All else is well."

"Heaven's blessing rest upon you!" said the farmer. "But," he continued, "do not eat me now. Let me go and spend the night at home, and say good-bye to my wife and children; then I will come back early to-morrow morning to be eaten."

This, then, was the point at which the story commenced.

Then the man went home, and so did the tiger,

after they had agreed to meet for breakfast at dawn on the morrow.

As he went Biloch Khan began to think about what had happened, and he became very sad.

Just inside of the house his wife sat on the floor, grinding corn. Seeing her husband's long face, the cheery little woman stopped in her work, and exclaimed—"Why, what is the matter? Are you ill? Have you a headache?"

"Ay! and a heart-ache too, my dear Fatty!" (This was the term of endearment which the more classic form of the good woman's name naturally contracted into, and which her figure warranted.) And then Biloch Khan told her all that had happened. And he added—

"Of course I must keep my promise."

"Of course," the woman said, greatly to my surprise.

Suddenly a light seemed to come into Fatima's eyes, and she asked—

"Tell me exactly where you are to meet the tiger to-morrow morning."

"Under the tamarisk-tree, on the west embankment at dawn."

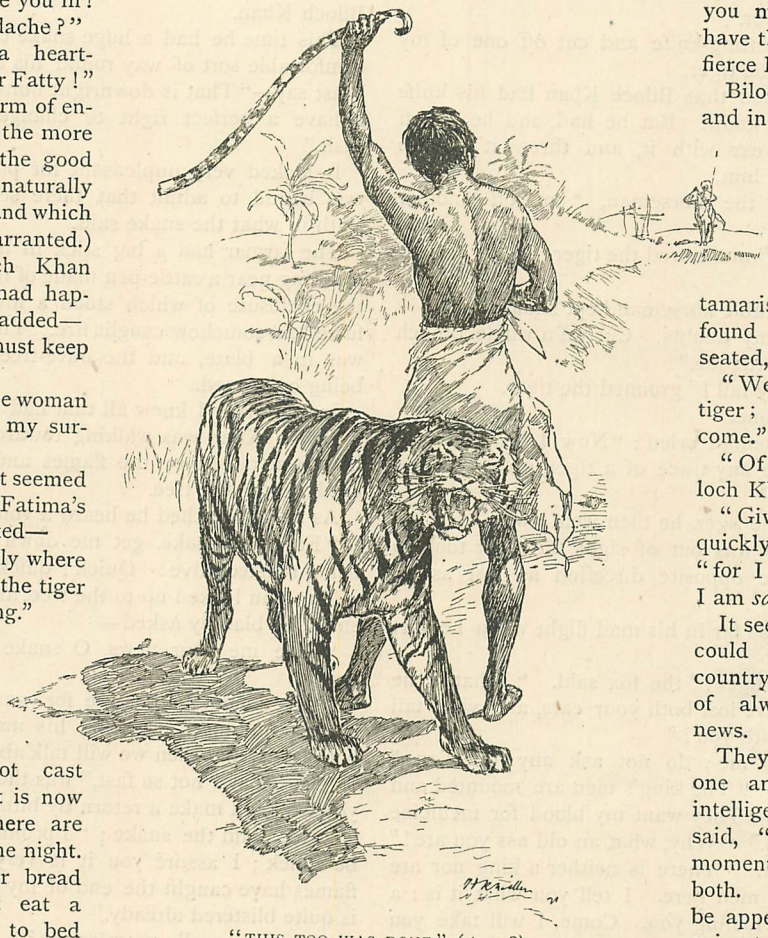
"Well, be not cast down or sad. It is now but evening. There are four watches of the night. I will cook your bread now; you must eat a good meal. Go to bed and sleep well, for the All-Merciful One may show mercy to you. If not, it is your fate to die!"

In the morning, before the dawn, at the time of prayer, Biloch Khan was up and ready to keep his word.

But early as he was, his good wife was astir before him.

"Dearest hubby," she exclaimed when she saw him awake, "must we say good-bye? As you are going to be eaten, you will not want your shield and sword. The distance is very short too, so you need not take your mare. Please leave these for me to sell, for after you are gone I shall be very poor. Your clothes too will only be an encumbrance to the tiger and you. So leave all behind that you can spare."

"Good-bye, mother of Pir Bakhsh; may we meet with all the Faithful in Paradise."



"THIS TOO WAS DONE" (*p.* 338).

So saying, he went out. As soon as her husband's back was turned, Fatima began making preparations which seemed to show that she did not yet wish Biloch Khan to be an addition to the Faithful in Paradise. She put on the man's clothes that had been left behind. She took the sword and shield, the matchlock, powder-flask, and flint. She saddled the mare and mounted. Had you met her you would have thought her quite a fierce little warrior.

Biloch Khan went on, and in about a quarter of an hour (for he did not wish to be too punctual in keeping his appointment) reached the tamarisk-tree. Here he found the tiger already seated, waiting for him.

"Welcome!" said the tiger; "you are really come."

"Of course," said Biloch Khan.

"Give me your news quickly," said the tiger, "for I cannot wait long; I am *so* hungry."

It seemed that nothing could be done in that country without this form of always giving the news.

They finished telling one another the latest intelligence. The tiger said, "Now the happy moment is come for us both. My hunger is to be appeased, and you are going to have the reward of the Faithful in Paradise. Are you ready?"

Just then a piercingly shrill voice cried out—

"Ho there! you farmer! have you seen track of a tiger anywhere about your field? The king's son is ill, and a tiger's blood is wanted for medicine. Can you tell me where I can find one? There is a band of the king's horsemen beating the whole country for one. The king will give a great reward to the man that kills one. You shall be rewarded if you help me."

The horseman had appeared suddenly on top of the embankment, at a distance of about three hundred yards.

The tiger began to tremble, and said in an undertone to Biloch Khan: "Now, don't split on me, and I will not eat you."

"Will you faithfully keep your word?" the man asked.

"Faithfully," answered the tiger.

The farmer then shouted out: "There is no tiger anywhere about here."

"What is that dark-looking thing on your left side?" shouted the horseman.

"Say it is a bush," whispered the tiger.

"It is a bush!" was the shout.

"If it is, cut off a leaf and throw it towards me," returned the warrior.

"Draw your hunting-knife and cut off one of my ears," whispered the tiger.

How it happened that Biloch Khan had his knife with him I do not know. But he had, and he cut off the tiger's right ear with it, and threw it on the ground in front of him.

"Now," cried the horseman, "cut off another leaf."

"My other ear," murmured the tiger.

This was done.

Still that inexorable horseman kept shouting.

"I still have my doubts. Cut off a whole branch and throw it towards me."

"Oh, cut off my tail!" groaned the tiger.

This too was done.

At last the horseman cried: "Now I am satisfied. If you should see any trace of a tiger, give me news of it. Farewell!"

To the joy of the tiger, he then went away.

As soon as he was out of sight the tiger took to his heels in the opposite direction as fast as he could.

He had not gone far in his mad flight when he met a fox in the way.

"Welcome, O tiger!" the fox said. "What is the matter? You have lost both your ears, and your tail too. Is it well with you?"

"Do not stop me; do not ask any questions," gasped the tiger. "The king's men are mounted and searching for me. They want my blood for medicine for the king's son." "Why, what an old ass you are!" answered the fox. "There is neither a king nor are there any king's men here. I tell you what it is: a woman has been fooling you. Come, I will take you back; you can eat the man, woman, horse, and all you like, and give me my share too."

"I do not know," answered the tiger. "You are a rascally fox, and you are probably hoaxing me now. I will only return on one condition: and that is that we shall be tied together round the waists. Then, whatever I am in for you will be in for as well."

"Agreed!" said the fox. He then went in search of a rope, and the tiger and the fox bound themselves firmly together and went back towards the embankment. As they approached they saw the horseman, who had returned to the farmer.

As soon as the horseman caught sight of them, he cried out, "Look here: last night I told this fox to bring me a couple of tigers. He has already brought one."

On hearing this, the tiger once more bounded helter-skelter into the jungle. The fox was dragged after him, and dashed against trees and rocks one after another, until he was killed. The tiger was never seen in that country again.

II.—THE FARMER AND THE SNAKE.

AGAIN I was conscious of seeing my farmer friend, Biloch Khan.

This time he had a huge snake coiled up in an uncomfortable sort of way round his neck. I heard the beast say—"That is downright nonsense! Of course I have a perfect right to change my mind, if I wish."

It looked very unpleasant for poor Bill, but still I was bound to admit that there seemed to be some truth in what the snake said.

The farmer had a big stick in his hand. He was standing near a cattle-pen made of furze bushes, within the enclosure of which stood a low olive-tree. The furze had somehow caught fire. The whole cattle-pen was in a blaze, and the olive-tree, too, was rapidly being consumed.

Instinctively I knew all that had happened.

Biloch Khan was walking towards his home when he was attracted by the flames and cries which proceeded from the tree.

As he approached he heard a voice—

"For pity's sake, get me down from here; I am being roasted alive! Quick! quick!"

The man looked up to the tree, and when he saw the snake he blandly asked—

"Give me your news, O snake! Is it well with you?"

"Oh, do not bother me for news," answered the reptile, for once forgetting his manners. "Get me out of this, and then we will talk about news."

"Nay, nay! not so fast," was the reply. "If I help you, you will make a return by biting me."

"No," said the snake; "I promise I will not. Do be quick; I assure you it is very warm here. The flames have caught the end of my tail. I can feel it is quite blistered already."

"Will you really promise me?"

"Yes, yes; I will promise anything. Save me!"

On this, Biloch Khan relented, and saying to himself it must be rather unpleasant to have one's tail roasted, he held up his stick, and allowed the snake to coil himself round and crawl down. But not contented with the stick, he glided rapidly from it on to the farmer's arm, and then settled round his neck, as we have seen him.

He then said—

"Now I will tell you my news: it is that I am going to bite you."

"Oh! but," pleaded the man, "you said you would not. You promised most faithfully."

"I know I did," returned the serpent, "but I have changed my mind."

"But you cannot. A promise is a promise, and you made me a very solemn one."

Then said the snake, as we have already seen—

"That is downright nonsense! Of course I have a perfect right to change my mind, if I wish."

"I dispute that," was the reply; "for, in the first place, you have no mind to change, and in the second place, if you had, it is a privilege that belongs to ladies only."

"Ha, ha!" laughed the snake; "I accept what you say, but I am the exception that proves the rule. This is what men themselves say, and though I do not know what it means, I can apply it to my own case."

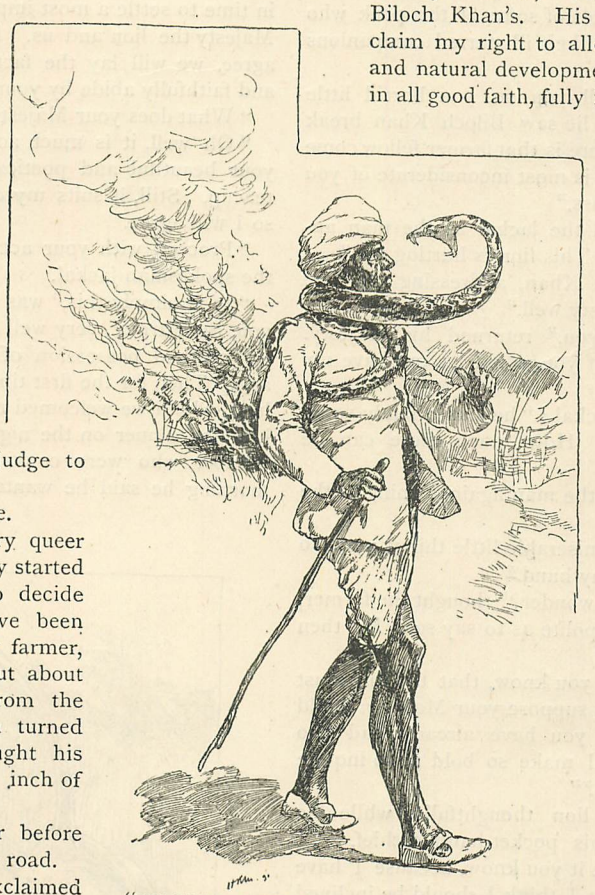
"Well," said Biloch Khan again, after a brief period for reflection, "it is an awkward position, for, you see, we differ so completely in our notions of what is right. I can only make one suggestion, and it is that you do not bite me yet, but that we submit the matter to a judge to decide for us."

"Agreed," said the snake.

It seemed to be a very queer proceeding, and yet off they started in search of someone to decide their case. It must have been very awkward for the poor farmer, for the snake stretched out about two feet of his length from the man's shoulder, and then turned his head round and brought his fangs within about half an inch of the wretched fellow's nose.

They had not gone far before they saw a fox crossing the road.

"Here is the umpire!" exclaimed the man, and then he cried out, "Welcome, oh, fox! you are come in the nick of time."



"MY NEWS IS THAT I AM GOING TO BITE YOU" (*p.* 338).

"Salaam," returned the fox; "give me your news."

"My news," said the man, "is that this snake and I have a difficult dispute which we cannot settle. We wish you to be umpire."

"How is this?" asked the fox. "I cannot decide this matter while the plaintiff and defendant are thus, one sitting on the other. Before I hear the case, you, O snake, must come down, and sit like a reasonable being on the ground."

"There," said Biloch Khan to himself, "I said the snake had no mind, and the fox bears me out."

The snake then came down and composed himself on the ground.

"Now," continued the fox, addressing Biloch Khan, "tell me your story."

"My story," said he, "is as follows:—I was going home. I saw a cattle-pen on fire. I heard cries from a tree within the enclosure. They came from the snake, who was being roasted. I saved him after he had promised not to bite me. When he was safe he settled on my neck, and said he would bite me. Then we agreed to go to a judge. All else is well."

"And your account, please," blandly smiled the fox, as he turned to the snake.

"My account," he said, "is the same as Biloch Khan's. His facts are correct, but I claim my right to allow my opinions their full and natural development. I made the promise in all good faith, fully intending at the moment I made it to carry it out. I did carry it out until circumstances changed so much that I felt bound in conscience to bite Biloch Khan. It is just the natural development of thought which some people call change of mind. All else is well."

"Bless you both!" said the fox. He took two minutes to consider the case. He then continued:—"In this weighty case it is needless that I should make known the grave considerations which have led to my decision. As you have both agreed to abide by what I say, I give my decision at once. It is this (turning to the farmer): that you, Biloch Khan, take your stick and knock the snake on the head."

Biloch Khan did so, and the snake died.

I thought the fox was another exception, and that to his evil race. But whether he proved any rule or not I could not find out.

III.—THE LION AND THE JACKALS.

ONE night Biloch Khan had just retired to rest. He was already beginning to enjoy his well-earned sleep when he was rudely awakened by the piercing cries of a number of jackals, which were evidently not far away from his cottage.

He listened for a time, and soon he thought he heard his own name called. Hastily putting on his clothes (they were scanty enough), he proceeded in the direction of the noise. Cautiously he made his way through the thick jungle. The cries became louder and louder.

Presently he fancied he heard muttered in very deep tones—

"Can't you stop that noise? You will rouse the whole neighbourhood."

In a few moments he came into an open space, and there he saw before him a huge lion holding down one jackal with his paw and crunching the remains of another in his mouth, while here and there, peering through the undergrowth, the farmer could see in the moonlight the terrified faces of some of the pack who were watching the fate of their ill-starred companions at a respectful distance.

"There, did I not tell you so, you horrid little beast!" said the lion as he saw Biloch Khan break through the bushes. "Here is that farmer fellow come to disturb my repast. It is most inconsiderate of you to make that ridiculous fuss."

"Bill, dear Bill," cried the jackal as the man approached, "do help me. This lion is hurting me."

"Salaam," said Biloch Khan, addressing the lion. "I hope I see your Majesty well."

"Pretty well, thank you," returned his Majesty. "But I should be better if you would let me have my dinner in peace."

"Oh!" groaned the jackal; "he has already eaten my brother and sister. How much more can he want?"

"Is that true?" asked the man again, turning to the lion.

"Yes; but they were miserable little things: not so big even as this one in my hand."

"Which is his hand, I wonder?" thought the farmer, though he was not so impolite as to say so. He then added aloud—

"We always consider, you know, that the line must be drawn somewhere. I suppose your Majesty would agree to that. And as you have already had two jackals for dinner, may I make so bold as to inquire where you would draw it?"

"Well," replied the lion thoughtfully, while he wiped his mouth with his pocket-handkerchief. "I do not know much about it you know, because I have never been to school, but I think I should be inclined to draw it where I once saw it on a map. It was all round the globe, at equal distances from the north and south poles. But I confess I do not see much connection between that and my dinner."

"You mistake me, dear sir," answered Biloch Khan. "I meant that we ought always to live by strict rule, on a regular system. My inquiry simply amounted to this: do you place a fixed limit to the quantity you eat? I was always told when I was a little boy that it was a good thing to get up from table feeling a little, even though a very little, hungry."

"Yes, that is very well for you," said the lion, quite mournfully, and he wiped a tear-drop from his eye as he added, "But we poor lions, you see, have no tables to get up from."

While this conversation was proceeding many of the jackals in the bushes became bolder when they saw that they had a friend in the new arrival. Some of them came to within about ten yards of the central group, while the foremost, who spoke for them all, said—

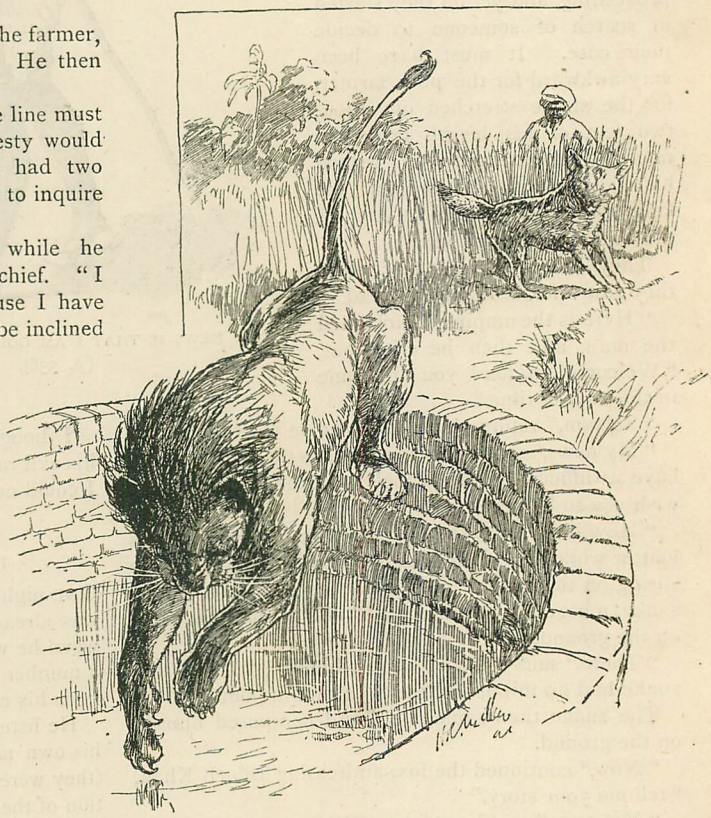
"Welcome, O Biloch Khan! you are come now just in time to settle a most important dispute between his Majesty the lion and us. If his Royal Highness will agree, we will lay the facts of the case before you, and faithfully abide by your decision."

"What does your Majesty say?" asked the farmer.

"Oh well, it is much ado about nothing, or, to use your beautiful and poetical language, a storm in a teacup. Still, it suits my dignity to condescend, and so I will agree."

"Proceed with your account," said Biloch Khan to the spokesman jackal.

"It is simply this," was the reply: "we jackals, as you, Sir Farmer, very well know, lived in peaceful and undisturbed possession of this land until three days ago. Then for the first time his Royal Highness came here, whom we welcomed right royally. For we sent him for dinner on the night of his arrival two of our number who were convicted criminals. The next morning he said he wanted breakfast, and before we



"HE IMAGINED THERE WAS A FOE WORTHY OF HIM. HE JUMPED!" (p. 341).

could make any provision he came down upon one of our bands and killed three jackals. The same thing happened again at night. We have been hunted about from bush to bush, or as you say, I think, from pillar to post. Not one of our lives is safe. You yourself saw what happened to-night. Having eaten two, he is not now satisfied, but he holds another, as you see. We want to regulate his diet for him."

"Certainly," meditated the farmer; "it is most important for his own health. Too much jackal diet is most pernicious for the system. All medical men say so."

After a time he said—

"My decision is this: that the lion must be contented with one jackal a day, to be administered in the morning for breakfast. The jackals must draw lots among themselves as to which of them shall have the honour."

"Agreed!" shouted all the jackals.

"Agreed!" muttered the lion; "but it is precious little."

The lion therefore released the jackal he was holding, and Biloch Khan retired once more to rest, feeling that he had really done a good work.

A week passed by, and no more disturbance was heard. On the eighth day, however, at dawn, there came a tap at the farmer's door, and on opening it, there stood the jackal who had so narrowly escaped the lion's jaw on the night when the case was decided.

He had a merry twinkle in his eye as he answered to the man's salutation and inquiry for news.

"All is well. It is my turn to be breakfast for the lion. I drew the lot last night."

"Well, you do not seem to be very much distressed at your impending fate. I suppose the honour outweighs the pain."

"Not quite," returned the jackal, and he winked again; "but I thought you would like to see a little game I am playing, so I just looked in."

"I shall be delighted to see your game," said the man, "but you will have to be quick about it, for I fancy it is the lion's breakfast-time now, and you will be late."

"That is just what I intend to be," said the jackal; "so if you have no objection, I will sit down in your house for an hour or so."

Saying this, he composed himself in a corner and looked perfectly happy.

When the hour was up, he arose and told Biloch Khan to follow him cautiously, so that he could hear all that passed without being seen.

Forth went the two, the jackal leading, the man following. They had walked about a mile when the lion's roarings began to be audible. Each step they took the sound became more distinct. After a time the jackal held up his paw to tell the man to halt. The animal then proceeded alone.

Biloch Khan heard all that passed.

The lion angrily roared out—"What is the meaning of this? It is an hour and a half after my breakfast time. You have broken the agreement; I will take vengeance on the whole race of jackals! I am dying of hunger. Come quick, and be eaten."

"Be not angry with me, your Majesty," simpered the jackal. "I did the best I could. I did not wish you to be deprived of your breakfast."

"What do you mean, sir?" again roared the lion.

"Oh, your Highness," the jackal answered, "I set out in good time before dawn to come to breakfast, but I had not gone half a mile before I met a lion in your Majesty's dominions who had no right here. I knew if he saw me he would eat me, and you would remain hungry. So I dodged and dodged, and after very great trouble I have escaped from him, and am come, though so late. I thought you would wish before eating me to know that there was an enemy invading your realm."

"An enemy in this country!" exclaimed the lion. "Either he or I must die. Tell me, you scoundrel, where is he?"

"I could show your Majesty if you would be pleased to follow me."

"Lead; I follow!" cried the lion, with tail erect.

Back turned the jackal; the lion followed him, while Biloch Khan kept as near as he dared.

After breaking through a thick jungle and keeping cautiously under cover, they finally emerged from the uncultivated country into a field of a very high crop, called jowár.

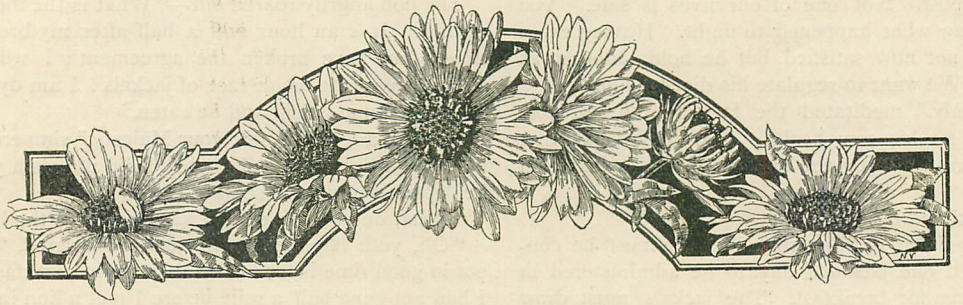
This belonged to the farmer whose land bordered on Biloch Khan's. At the other side of the field were some trees which overshadowed a deep well. Towards this the jackal made his way. The man behind hesitated a moment as to whether it was safe to go on. Then he saw how intent the lion was on fighting his foe, and he came to the conclusion that he might venture on seeing the game played out. On they went, and came to the edge of the well.

"Look into that hole," whispered the jackal. "Your enemy has taken up his abode there for the present."

The lion stood on the edge, his tail beating in anger for a moment; the jackal was behind, grinning all over his face.

The king of animals saw his own reflection in the water, and imagined there was a foe worthy of him. He jumped, he splashed into the water; he was drowned!

The jackals were free.



Minuetto for the Pianoforte.

B. Palmieri.

Tempo di minuetto. Allegretto sostenuto.

Piano.

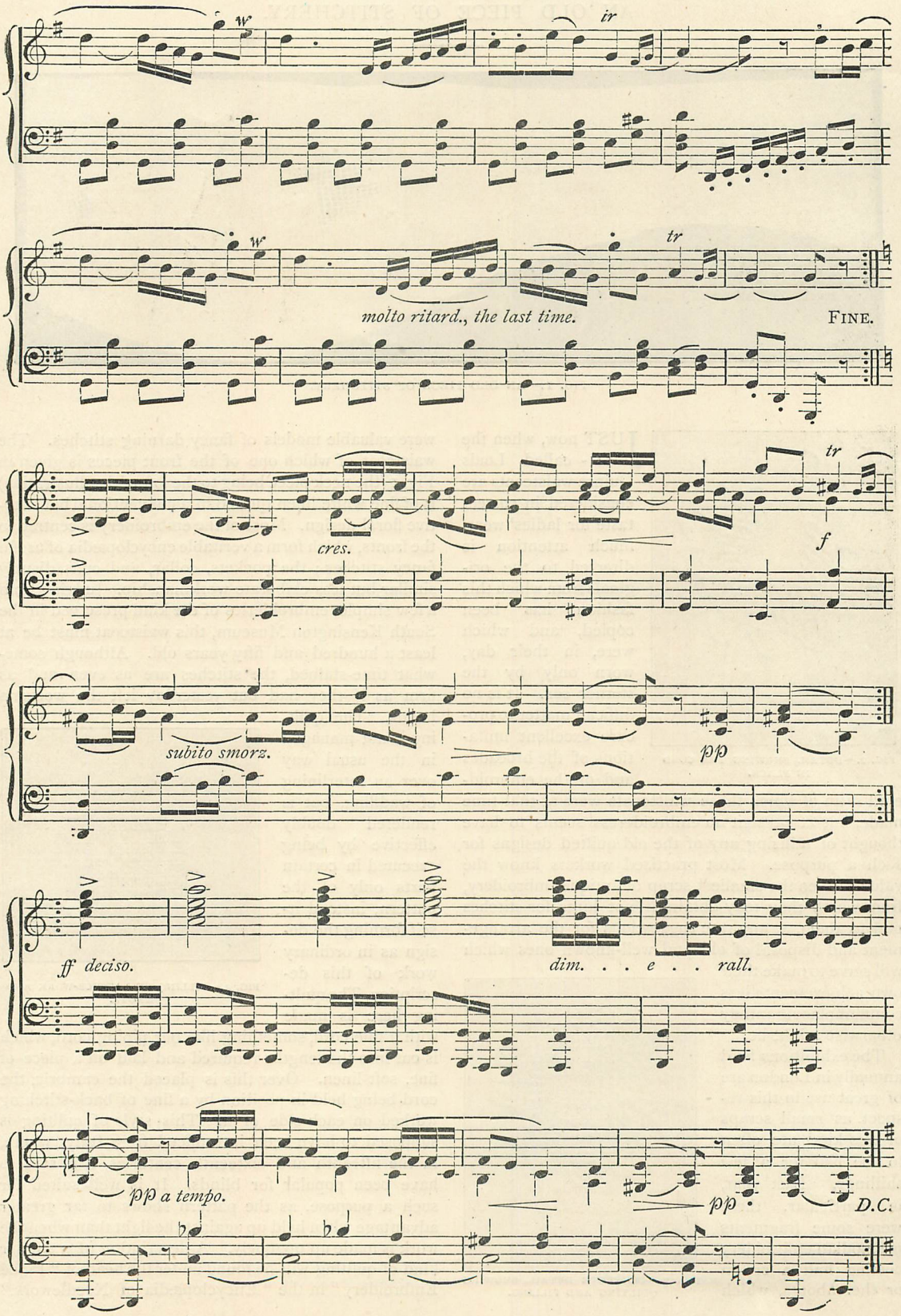
p Con grazia.

tr

f

cres.

pp


w
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molto ritard., the last time.
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D.C.

AN OLD PIECE OF STITCHERY.

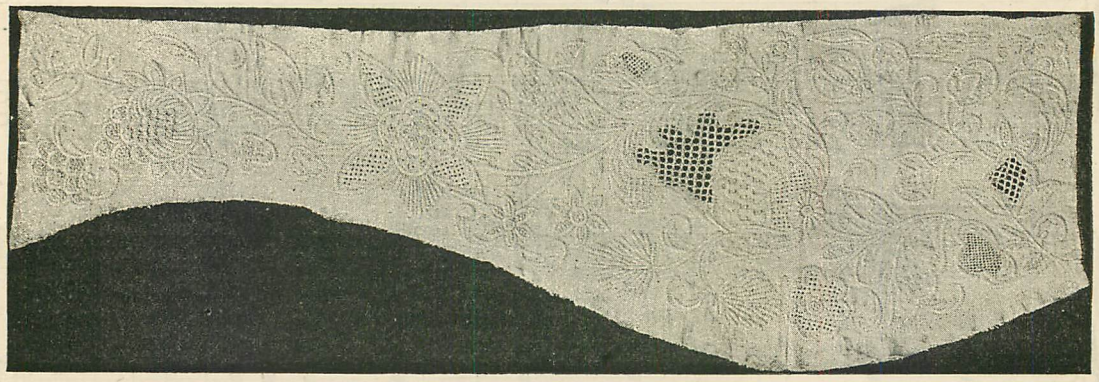


FIG. 1.—AN OLD PIECE OF STITCHERY.

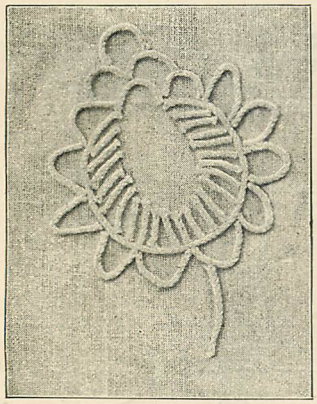


FIG. 2.—DETAIL, SHOWING THE CORD IN PLACE.

JUST now, when the so - called Louis Quinze waistcoats are considered in correct taste for ladies' wear, much attention is directed to the originals from which this fashion has been copied, and which were, in their day, worn only by the sterner sex. It is no difficult matter to procure excellent imitations of the brocades and of the embroidered satin of which these waistcoats were at that time made, but at present no embroideress seems to have thought of utilising any of the old quilted designs for such a purpose. Most practised workers know the value of even the smallest scrap of antique embroidery, from which they may obtain, if not hints for stitches new to them, at any rate suggestions for the arrangement and disposal of old and well-known ones which will serve to make their own achievements less commonplace than they otherwise might be.

The exhibitions held annually in London are of great use in this respect, as small scraps of this kind are often to be had for a few shillings. Last year, in particular, there were some fragments of Rhodian embroidery costing half a crown or thereabouts, which were valuable models of fancy darning stitches. The waistcoat of which one of the front pieces is given in Fig. 1 (the neck piece being to the left of the illustration) is of fine white linen quilted in a conventional but effective floral design. Most of the embroidery is centred in the fronts, which form a veritable encyclopædia of useful fancy stitches; the pockets, collar, and cuffs display similar but less elaborate workmanship. Judging from a few simpler embroideries of the kind preserved in the South Kensington Museum, this waistcoat must be at least a hundred and fifty years old. Although somewhat time-stained, the stitches are as even and as firm as if they had but yesterday left the worker's hands. The quilting is not managed in the usual way over an interlining of wadding, but is rendered doubly effective by being executed in certain parts only of the pattern, instead itself forming the design as in ordinary work of this description. The quilting here is made with a fine cord, something like our piping cord, which is cut into the lengths required and laid on a piece of fine, soft linen. Over this is placed the cambric, the cord being held in position by a line of back-stitching worked on each side of it. This style of quilting is supposed to have been introduced from Italy, where, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it is said to have been popular for blinds. It is well suited for such a purpose, as the pattern shows to far greater advantage when held up against the light than when the work is made up opaquely. A description of a similar kind of quilting will be found under the head of "Piqué Embroidery" in the "Encyclopædia of Needlework,"

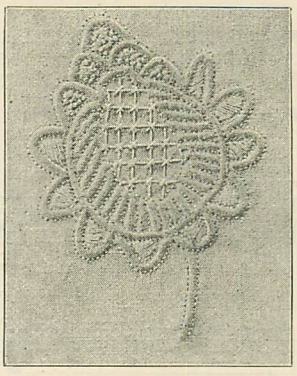


FIG. 3.—COMPLETE DETAIL, SHOWING QUILTING AND FILLING.

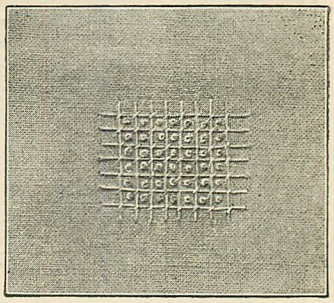


FIG. 4.—FILLING OF LATTICE-WORK AND KNOTS.

by Thérèse de Dillmont, but neither the details of the design nor the stitches are so elaborate and varied as in the English example.

In Fig. 2 is shown, slightly enlarged, one of the details of the design with the cord in place. The pattern is marked on the lower and thinner material, which is then spread lightly with paste. Before this has had time to dry, the cord is laid over the design wherever required, and cut into lengths as it is placed

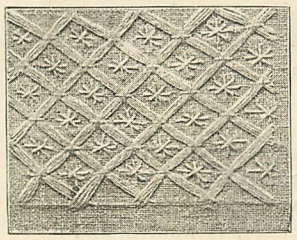


FIG. 5.—FILLING OF LAID THREADS AND LEVIATHAN CROSS-STITCH.

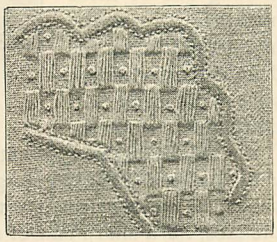


FIG. 6.—FILLING OF "BRICK" STITCH AND KNOTS.

on the linen. A small portion of the linen only must be pasted at a time, as the paste becomes absorbed very quickly. When all the cord is in place, the second material should be very thinly coated with paste and laid over the first piece of linen. It must be thoroughly pressed down over the cord, then put under a pile of heavy books till it is quite dry.

Fig. 3 gives the detail shown in Fig. 2 completed, and from it should be clearly understood the method of working the lines of fine stitching and the way of filling in the leaves with satin-stitch. Clusters of French knots fill the upper part of this conventional fruit, while the lattice-work in the middle is easily copied. In the original this is worked with an exceedingly fine and crisply twisted cord, unlike anything we have nowadays. The nearest approach to it is fine crochet cotton, but it may be still more closely imitated by overcasting each stitch, as it is made, with fine cotton. The worker will find that no tracing of the design is necessary upon the second material, for the ridges made by the cord define it sufficiently. Should any doubt arise, she can at once verify the design by holding it up to the light. It is advisable to begin the work as nearly as possible in the middle of the material and to work gradually outwards, putting in none of the fillings till all the stitching is completed. Some of the most effective of the fillings found in different parts of the waistcoat are given slightly larger than the original size in Figs. 4, 5, and 6.

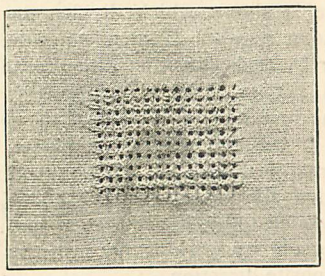


FIG. 7.—FILLING OF OPEN-WORK AND CROSS-STITCH.

That in Fig. 4 is principally used for some of the smaller parts of the design, such as buds and leaves. It consists of two sets of straight threads which divide the linen into squares like a miniature chessboard. These lines are kept in place at each point of meeting by a tiny slanting stitch, worked like the half of a cross-stitch, and in the middle of each square is placed a small French knot.

A similar network is shown in Fig. 5, but here the lines are laid diagonally and in sets of four. These threads are held down with a cross-stitch worked straight according to the threads of the linen. The space between them is of course larger than in the foregoing example, and therefore it is filled with what we now know as a Leviathan cross-stitch. This arrangement of stitches can only be used as a covering for a wide expanse of material, and is here employed principally as a filling for a large scroll-like leaf. Several of the other leaves are powdered with Leviathan cross-stitches without the lattice-work, and in others again their place is taken by groups of French knots.

A very large and bold filling is that in Fig. 6. Here the corded outlines of the design are shown, the space between them being filled with groups of

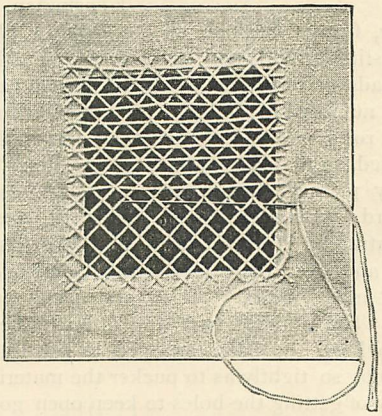


FIG. 8.—SIMPLE LACE-STITCH.

six long straight stitches, alternating with French knots, and resembling what is known in modern canvas embroidery as "brick"-stitch. This filling would be effective upon much of the linen embroidery at present popular if worked in two colours, or in two shades of the same. The worker must notice in copying this arrangement of stitches that each group is commenced rather above the bottom of those in the preceding row. This is an apparently trifling matter, but it tends to raise the stitches into rather high relief, and consequently to depress the space reserved for the French knots.

French knots were apparently thought as effective and useful a century and a half ago as they are at the present day, for they are used here as powderings, both singly and in groups, and are massed to serve as fillings for small leaves and flowers. Our workers may well take a lesson from the old embroideries and make their knots not only tighter and closer, but far smaller than they generally do. To be well made, each knot should set as closely and firmly as a bead against

the material. Those in the waistcoat are as compact and tight as when they were first made, in spite of wear and tear and washing.

Another feature of this piece of embroidery is the clever way in which certain details are filled in with open work. In Fig. 7 are shown a few stitches of an open pattern which fills the petals of some of the smaller flowers and other details. At first sight, and especially just now when drawn thread work is so much executed, the worker would think that this has been used to produce the open effect on these portions of the design, and, indeed, "drawn thread work" is described as being included in the similar vests at South Kensington. Here, however, from the slope of the designs filled with it, the stitch could not be executed in a line with the threads of the linen, as drawn thread work must be. A number of holes were therefore made in straight rows, one below the other, across the space to be filled, so that the surface of the linen becomes regularly pierced, like a coarse kind of perforated cardboard. Between these holes is stretched a set of straight stitches much like those shown in Fig.. 4, and over them is worked a series of cross-stitches made exactly as in the usual way over canvas. The stitches are drawn up rather firmly, so as to keep the holes as open as possible, but, of course, not so tightly as to pucker the material. The difficulty of getting the holes to keep open goes far to prove that the waistcoat when new was worked upon a tolerably stiff make of linen, for upon a soft quality the threads fall together long before the filling is finished. It is a good plan to use a small carpet needle while making this open work after the straight lines are laid, thus piercing the holes and working the cross-stitch at the same time.

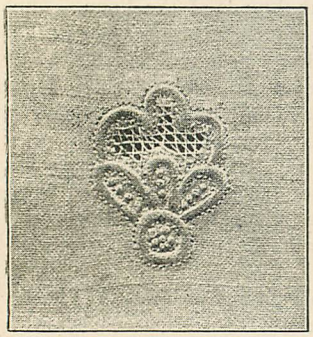


FIG. 9.—DETAIL, SHOWING USE OF LACE-STITCH (SLIGHTLY ENLARGED).

The other two open-work stitches are similar to many that are used in lace-making, that shown in Fig. 8 being by no means tedious to execute. The portion of linen to be replaced by the network is first of all covered with a lattice of straight threads made exactly like those in Fig. 4, except that they are laid upon the material diagonally instead of vertically and horizontally. These are then crossed horizontally by a set of straight threads darned alternately over and under the lattice just where the two sets cross one another. This is readily understood from the working detail, Fig. 8, where the needle is shown in the act of making one of these horizontal lines, the manner of placing the diagonal threads being seen in the lower portion of the illustration.

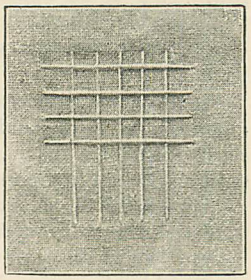


FIG. 10.—METHOD OF WORKING LACE-STITCH IN FIG. 13.

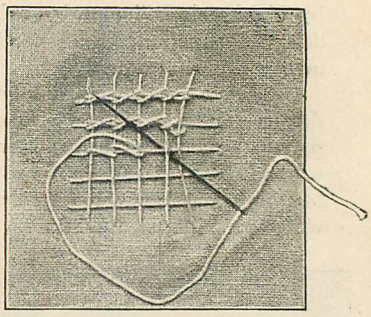


FIG. 11.—METHOD OF WORKING LACE-STITCH IN FIG. 13.

Fig. 9 shows the application of the stitch to a conventional bud slightly enlarged. Considerable care is needed in cutting away the two layers of linen beneath the lace, for a sharp pair of scissors is wanted, and no little inconvenience is caused should these chance to sever either of the threads. The worker must allow a narrow margin of linen beyond the corded outlines of the network, or there will be nothing to support the threads, and they will become pulled away from the foundation the first time the embroidery is cleaned. This stitch is very little more trouble to execute than the ordinary plain darning which occasionally finds a place in linen embroidery. Some of the new designs brought out for ladies to work have flowing streamers and bows and ends of ribbon amongst the floral sprays, and these lend themselves well to the use of this stitch, either with coloured threads or silks or with washing tinsel. The latter reproduces almost exactly the appearance of a semi-transparent gold ribbon.

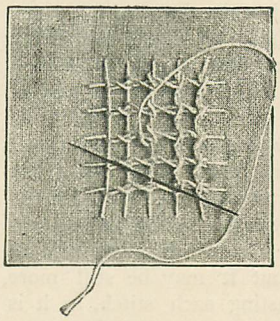


FIG. 12.—METHOD OF WORKING LACE-STITCH IN FIG. 13.

The second lace stitch is rather more elaborate, and is one which I have been unable to find in any handbook on the subject. It is even more effective than the other.

A finished detail, somewhat enlarged, is shown in Fig. 13, the three working details being given in Figs. 10, 11, and 12. In the first (Fig. 10), the ordinary square lattice is shown which divides the space to be covered into a number of small squares. These are worked over in each direction with cross-stitches, the needle in Fig. 11 being in the position required for making the first half of one set of these stitches. The needle, it will be noticed, is passed upwards under the straight threads at the points at which they cross. When all the stitches have been made along the line from left to right, the second half of the cross-stitch is made by working back in the same manner in the opposite direction.

Fig. 12 shows the manner of making the second set

of cross-stitches. These are taken over the vertical threads of the lattice and the needle is passed

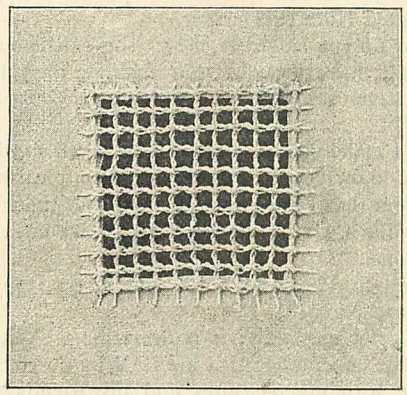


FIG. 13.—LACE-STITCH COMPLETED.

under the straight threads which lie between the previous set of stitches. They are made first downwards, then back again up the line. At the end the needle is passed down through the linen and brought up again where it is necessary to begin the next set of stitches.

It is needless to say that the same precautions must be taken here in cutting away the double layer of linen as in the first example. In one place in the original the worker has apparently forgotten to cut away all the linen beneath the lace network. Such imperfections—if indeed they are to be called imperfections—are valuable in the eyes of a connoisseur, who becomes truly weary nowadays of the faultless regularity of machine-made embroideries, besides which they are of great utility in showing how the stitch was originally executed. The lace stitches should be made loosely rather than tightly, as it is not advisable that they should set too formally.

The worker will find that fine flax or lace thread is most suitable for the open-work stitches; fine embroidery cotton answers well for the fillings, and ordinary sewing cotton for the stitching. It will be seen that the execution of such a piece of work as this depends more upon the time than upon the money the embroideress has at her disposal, but when once done it is practically everlasting, and hence will amply compensate her for the pains she has taken.

ELLEN T. MASTERS.

A GUARDIAN OF HONOUR.

A STORY IN ONE CHAPTER.

"OH, Nora, don't cry! Whatever is the matter? Quick! stop crying, and tell me, for I shall be caught if I stay long; only don't cry!" And the inky school boy hand stroked her hair—the wrong way—and the boyish voice was full of that anxious helplessness that develops so soon in the masculine mind when confronted with feminine tears. But as no answer came from the bowed head, the rough fourteen-year-old comforter went on—

"I came to wish you many happy returns; and oh, I'm so sorry I haven't a present for you, but my pocket-money was stopped this week! I'll get you one next; only, what are you crying for? Do tell me."

"These!" said a choked voice, and she pushed a pile of books away from her.

"Lessons!" exclaimed the boy incredulously. "What on earth makes you cry over them? You never have before. And oh! I forgot I was to tell you that Morton will give you the translation if you will meet him in the wood between the schools this afternoon."

"You don't understand," said the girl, looking up with tearful eyes. "It's not the hardness, but it's the lessons at all. You know I am eighteen to-day, and I always thought that when I was eighteen he would let me come out, and have fun, and be like other girls. But to-day he said that I was much too ignorant."

"That's stuff!" broke in her brother, "and nothing to do with it. It is the ignorant girls that do come out." Wherein he spoke truly.

"And so he says I must work for another year, and then he will think about it," and she relapsed into fresh sobs.

"Beast!" ejaculated the boy. "But you can have lots of fun here, you know, watching the matches and larking about. I must go now—only don't cry!"

"He doesn't understand," mused Nora sorrowfully, as the door banged. "He is so young, and he has his school-fellows, and he loves cricket; but it is different for me. I am so tired of being scolded: other girls never are; and I do so want to enjoy myself while I'm young. I know he will keep me in school till I'm too old to have any fun." She wondered then whether she should ever live to be thirty—on the whole, she thought not—but even if she did achieve so ripe an age, she had a vision of bath-chairs, and shawls, and old-maidenhood. So life looks through the delusive glasses we wear in our teens.

The name of this sorrowing individual was Nora Danvers, and some years before, on the death of her parents, she and her small brother had been handed over to the guardianship of the Reverend Edward Fagan, Head Master of Woodcote School, whose mother was their father's cousin, and their nearest living relative: hence the formidable "he" of her conversation.

Nora's education so far had been the main difficulty of the trust that Mr. Fagan had had imposed upon him, but with some extra work he had undertaken it himself, while little Nigel was drafted off into the life of the school, and did as well there as the average idle and ignorant English boy. But as Nora began to grow up a much greater difficulty presented itself. Already she flirted desperately with the Sixth, from the captain to the lag of the form inclusive; already she chafed violently against an authority which a little while before had been but a matter of course, and also she had erected the great dreamy structure that girls look forward to with joy, and women look back upon with pity, on the tangible foundation of her eighteenth birthday. But Mr. Fagan took another view of the situation.

"Nineteen is young enough for any girl to come out," said he to his mother, who had been raising a timid voice on Nora's behalf. And so the fiat had gone forth, and Nora was crying over her books when Nigel rushed in between the schools to give her his birthday greetings.

But tears were a very rare luxury with Nora Danvers. She had lived too much among boys, and was imbued with their traditions too deeply, to incur the charge of being a "cry-baby." And besides, she had a very high spirit of her own, and would have died sooner than let Mr. Fagan know how keenly she took his severity to heart.

It would have been difficult to have recognised the miserable, sobbing, rough-headed girl of the morning in the proud, dignified young lady, with carefully dressed hair (her hair being done differently gave her a feeling of more grown-up assurance), who came into the study that evening. But though Nora was able to present this cool and even scornful exterior, she was still secretly somewhat frightened at her interviews with her guardian. And her fears were not groundless, for Mr. Fagan was one of those stern, inexorable young head masters, who come to re-establish discipline in the schools which have been so shamefully neglected by the dear good old doctors of Divinity, who even then, by being "no strikers," seemed preparing for their episcopal reward.

"Where did you get this translation from?" asked Mr. Fagan, after glancing through it. Nora flushed up, for he had never asked her such a question before, though he was perfectly aware that most of her work was provided for her by her youthful admirers.

"I did not make it all myself," she faltered.

"You did not make any of it yourself of course, I know; but who gave it to you?"

"One of the boys."

"His name?"

"Oh, don't!" she said imploringly. "I really can't tell you. He would think it so mean of me."

"You seem to be much more afraid of his thinking you mean than of my doing so. What do you suppose I must think when you bring me stolen work like this day after day?" And there was a bitterness in his tone that Nora did not understand.

"I don't care what you think," she said defiantly; "you are equally hard on me, whatever I do. And," with a toss of her head, "'stolen' is hardly the word to apply to a—a lady."

Mr. Fagan looked up with a surprised smile, which exasperated Nora still further.

"Why do you laugh at me?" she said petulantly. "I should have thought that making me miserable would have satisfied you without laughing at my misery."

"Do I make you miserable?" he asked slowly.

"You know you do. And you take a pleasure in it. You forget that I am grown up, and that though I am treated like a wretched schoolboy, I have not the feelings of one."

"Is all this because I will not let you go to the Farquhars' party?"

"It is not only that: it is everything. Why won't you let me be as other girls are? Why do you always interfere with my pleasures and my friends? Even yesterday, when I was talking and laughing with some of the boys in the cricket-field, why did you come and stop it all, and make me walk like your prisoner for the rest of the afternoon?" and Nora's grievances almost choked her.

"Why, indeed?" thought the head master bitterly; but aloud he said—

"I am your guardian, and shall not discuss with you the why and the wherefore of all my actions. Until you cease to be my ward you will do as I tell you, and that is enough. What is the name of the boy?"

Perhaps it was the hard stern voice, perhaps it was the swelling sense of her own wrongs, or the dread of betraying her friend, that broke down the last fence of respect which kept back Nora's indignant spirit; but the fire flashed into her eyes, the colour burned bright in her cheeks, and all her former fear was forgotten in the storm of a great passion.

"You are unjust and cruel to me!" she cried. "You bully me as a man ought to be ashamed to bully anyone so much weaker than himself! You lash me with your tongue only because you daren't do so with your cane. You are my master, and you glory in making me feel it every instant of the day! You hate every one who is kind to me; that is why you want to know what boy has helped me, so that you may make him suffer for it; and you hate me as much—if that is possible—as I hate and detest you!"

"What is the boy's name?" asked Mr. Fagan quietly; and though she tried to defy him to his face, her spirit failed her.

"Morton," she said, with a sob of anger. "And why need you grudge me his friendship? But I might have known that you would! And now he will despise me for telling tales, and I shall lose his liking. It is cruel of you—cruel! And I will never speak to you again as long as I live!"

"Very well. You can read the classics with Morton in future, if you like, or the translations of them—we don't seem to derive much profit or pleasure from their study. Good-night; I'm busy now;" and he rose to open the door.

There was something in his look and voice that

frightened away Nora's fury—a wave of that sense of irrevocableness which quenches the most fiery passion swept over her.

"Good-night!" she echoed mechanically, and he smiled at her short-lived resolve never to speak to him again—but there was more sadness in that smile than in many a storm of tears.

He had told her he was busy, but his actions belied his words, for Mr. Fagan sat far into the night before his pen even resumed its corrective duties: sat thinking until the weight of his thoughts almost broke him down, and the burden of them was this—

"What an unutterable fool I have been—spending all my strength in keeping down the symptoms of that love which has taken my soul by storm, and which already would have claimed her, but for my strong hand; and forgetting how my sternness must appear to her! How different all must look from her side! Yes, I have lost my life's hope, and"—saddest thought of all—"it is my own fault!"

"You made me walk like your prisoner: you are cruel to me: you make me miserable, and you hate me as much—if that is possible—as I hate and detest you!" How the words burnt themselves into his very being! how they danced across the darkness on wings of fire, and stood out in bas-relief from all his thoughts! He covered his eyes with his hands to shut them out, but they rang in his ears as if taken up by the shout of a multitude. That they were true words—fully and finally true—he never dreamed of doubting. He knew so little of girls, and still less of women. He judged them by the same hard rules that he would have applied to himself. Whatever he himself said, he truly and for always meant. How could he guess then that Nora's words were but as the idle spray that crowns the breaking wave? In the passion of the moment she had said what an hour later she would have given anything to have unsaid, but Mr. Fagan could not possibly have understood this. Moreover, had he been as deep a student of human

"NORA LOOKED UP IN WONDER TO HEAR THE FAMILIAR VOICE SOUND SO UNFAMILIAR" (*p.* 351).

nature as he was of classics and mathematics, he would have known that a girl's hatred is far nearer than a girl's friendly liking to the borderland of Love.

In those silent evening hours he lived over again the last few years. He recalled too the hardness of his school and university life, the early appointment to his present good position, and yet the coldness and dulness of his home life. For Mr. Fagan's mother was a timid soul, very much afraid of her brilliant son, but no companion to him. He had no brothers or sisters, and his school work left him little time for recreation and society. Then one day a bright little brown-eyed girl came into his home, and brought an atmosphere of sunshine with her. And the little girl he liked grew into the woman he loved, but now, alas! she thought it hardly possible for him to hate her as much as she hated and detested him.

The next few days dragged out their weary length, and Nora decided that life was not worth living. Mr. Fagan had his doubts about it, too. She was allowed her own way in everything, nevertheless, but that afforded her no satisfaction now. Mr. Fagan took not the slightest notice of her, and, woman-like, she resented his indifference far more than his severity. She was more piqued by the cool way in which he threw all her studies aside than she had been by his persistent supervision, and angrier with him for ignoring her even than for hating her. So existence became intolerable at Woodcote, and Nora resolved to run away.

A very timid knock was heard at the head master's study door one evening soon afterwards, and a pale trembling little object appeared on the threshold.

"All right," said Mr. Fagan. "Who reports you? and for what?"

A cry of horror escaped from Nigel's lips—for it was he.

"Oh please, sir, no one; I came—I wasn't sent."

"How like the boy's eyes are to Nora's," thought the head master; and his voice softened as he said: "Can I do anything for you?"

The tears that fright had kept in before now welled over.

"Oh, sir," he cried, "it's Nora. She's gone!"

"Gone!" almost shouted Mr. Fagan. "What do you mean?"

"She's run away; she told Morton she should."

The head master dashed into the schoolroom, and after careful inquiries, discovered that one of the boys had met Nora close to the station, but nobody knew where she had gone. And Mr. Fagan believed them, for he knew that school-boys draw a quaint crooked line of their own, to separate the stainless dishonour of cheating masters in school from the deep-dyed dishonour of doing so out. The station-master was able to tell him that the girl had booked to London; so away her guardian started in pursuit, though already the summer evening was beginning to draw in. If he could only have looked into the down train that he shortly met, he would have seen naughty Nora smiling a hard little smile to herself as she pictured the consternation which would be caused at Woodcote on the discovery of her absence. She knew she could not stay in London, so she provided herself with a very effective disguise, which she had adopted in the waiting-room, and then returned by the next train as an old woman to Woodcote. Consequently, all trace of the girl had disappeared. But Mr. Fagan could not see into that other train, and as he rushed about the London station in his vain search, the torturing anxiety and pain in his face would have melted a far harder heart than Nora's; but she could not see that, either.

Days went on, and Mr. Fagan was never at home for more than one hour at a time. The boys enjoyed the laxity of rules and the general excitement, but Nora began to find it very dull shut up in the cottage home whither she had gone.

Old Mrs. Bunch lived some miles from Woodcote, and when Nora made her appearance late that evening she was very glad to accommodate the "old lady," who said that she had come from London for a few days' rest and change in country lodgings, and who begged Mrs. Bunch to take her in.

But when the excitement of so daring an adventure had abated, Nora found the days insupportably long and dull; moreover, fierce reaction had set in, and the far-off life at Woodcote seemed to her now a wonderfully bright and happy one. Deep down, too, in her soul there was an aching sorrow for the way in which she had treated her guardian—an unutterable longing to go back to him, and make it up and be forgiven—in the way that Mr. Fagan had always forgiven her when she had asked him, however much in the wrong she was.

On the fifth day that Nora had been away she was sitting moping alone in the kitchen; she dared not go out much, lest sharper eyes than poor dim-sighted Mrs. Bunch's should detect her disguise, when she was electrified to hear the parlour door open, and Mr. Fagan's familiar voice asking old Mrs. Bunch, who was knitting there, how she was.

"Pretty middlin', thank you, sir. Pray be seated. But it's long since I saw you in these parts."

"I have not often time enough to take so long a walk," said Mr. Fagan; "but I remembered your birthday to-day, Mrs. Bunch."

"Thank you kindly, sir," said the old woman, taking his offering, and looking with joy at the glittering gold. "And how be yourself? You're but looking middlin', sir."

"I am not very well, thank you. I have had a great trouble since I saw you last."

Nora's heart gave a sudden leap, and she quivered with a nameless dread. Perhaps Nigel or Mrs. Fagan were dead. The thought that he could really care about what became of her never entered Nora's head.

"How is that, sir? I hadn't heard of anything."

"You remember my ward, Miss Danvers?" he said, in a strange uncertain voice. "I—I mean we—have lost her."

"Eh? but I did hear that the young lady had run

away—wicked ungrateful piece of goods that she must be!"

"No, no, Mrs. Bunch, you must not say that; you don't understand. It was my fault."

"You don't say so! 'Tis but a mistake, sir; it couldna' rightly have been your doing?"

"Yes, yes, it was." And more to himself than to her: "If we could only see our mistakes before it is too late! I deserve to have brought this misery upon myself, but what I cannot forgive myself for is the injury I have done her. There is no trace of her anywhere. I only came home from my fruitless search last night, and what the next step is to be I cannot imagine."

"Eh! but you're in sair trouble, sir. I wish I could help you."

"Thank you, my good friend, I know you do. But it is a comfort to me to tell you this—I could not tell it to anyone else—my mother is so vexed with poor Nora that I cannot discuss it with her."

"Was it a quarrel ye had, sir?"

"I suppose so; but the fact is, Mrs. Bunch, it was my own abominable pride and selfishness. I loved to feel that she was in my power, I was madly, insanely jealous of her seeing and liking anyone else; and so I bound her to the study, because it was mine, and I forbade her going out lest she should learn to flirt like other girls do. I grew to think of her as always belonging to me, and I—I never thought how hard it was on her till that dreadful night when she told me she hated me; and then I understood."

"But many a lassie's word spoken in hot haste carries no heart-weight, sir."

"That carried heart-weight!" he said bitterly; and they sat silent, while the old woman wiped the tears that rolled down her furrowed cheeks.

"It cuts me sair to see you in trouble, Mister Edward: it makes me think of the old times, when Nurse Bunch was able so easily to dry your tears."

"Tears that come from one's own folly and sin cannot be easily dried, my friend. But come: I have never asked you how you are getting on."

"Nicely, thank you, sir. I have a lodger for a few days, who pays me handsome."

"What sort of a lodger?"

"An old woman from London, sir, who wanted a few days in the country. I don't rightly understand how she heard of me, but she paid me in advance."

"I am glad for you to get a little extra, Mrs. Bunch. But I must be going now; it is a long way home. Good-bye! So many thanks for your sympathy: that best of all sympathy—the sympathy of a listener."

"It's a long way, sir, for you to come without bite or sup; and you're sure you won't have anything?"

"No, thank you. I walked out here to-day to try to escape from my trouble, but I cannot walk far or fast enough for that. Good-bye!"

But as he walked up the winding woodland path there was a sound of uncertain steps behind him, a trembling hand laid on his arm, and a voice choked with sobs:—

"Oh, I couldn't help listening! Forgive me for hearing—for coming—for going!" and Mr. Fagan saw a strange heap of old clothes fall down before him, and in their midst Nora's rough head rocking to and fro in an agony of weeping.

Was it because he had nothing to say, or because he could not trust his voice to say it, that her guardian stood silent, with his hand resting on the bowed head?

"Oh, I wish you would kick me!" sobbed Nora. "I've been such a brute! I wish I was dead! It seemed so awful to listen, and yet I was there, and couldn't get out. Oh! for pity's sake speak to me, and say whether you can ever forgive me."

"The question of forgiveness is for you to decide; not me."

"Don't! it kills me to hear you speak like that! I wish you'd—you'd hit me!"

Mr. Fagan smiled a quivering smile.

"I never meant to be so horrid, but I didn't understand—I didn't—I didn't! But oh! I would give my life to unsay the hateful things I said to you that night!"

"Then will you, Nora?"

And Nora looked up in wonder to hear the familiar voice sound so unfamiliar, and as she met his eyes, veiled no longer by that stern pretence, she understood his question, and smiled her answer through a mist of tears.

Oh, if those five hundred boys could only have known that their severe, inexorable head master was sitting on the trunk of a fallen tree, with his arm round his runaway pupil, how happy they would have been! But not so happy as he was, after all!

Their tongues wagged fast enough when they heard that Mr. Fagan had found and brought home the truant, and varied were their speculations as to the punishment in store for such a sinner.

"What's he going to do to her?" they shouted, as Nigel returned from an interview with his sister that night.

"Marry her!" gasped Nigel, his face white with horror, and his eyes nearly dropping with wonder out of his empty little head.

"What?" shrieked the boys.

"What are you talking about, Danvers? You must be mad!" said Morton roughly.

"They must be mad!" groaned Nigel; "but it's true, all the same. Oh, if only you could have seen him laughing when Nora told me! It seemed somehow more awful than when he's at his worst in school."

"Whatever made her do it?" asked somebody.

"The same reason that made me hold out my hand so amiably to him the other day. He'd make her, never fear!" suggested a sarcastic spirit.

"Oh, no! she seemed to like it," said Nigel solemnly: "it's queer enough, but she did!"

"Gammon!" broke in a youthful sceptic. "I can't swallow that!"

"Girls are like that," observed Morton: "you never know where you've got them. You give them everything they want, and bow down and worship the ground they tread on, and they don't care a brass farthing about you! But if you are hard on them, and high

and mighty, and that sort of thing, and make them knock under, they say they hate you; and then they marry you!" With which sage observation the Sixth form hero retired, pushing aside rather fiercely several small boys who happened to be in his way.

"It's the most dreadful punishment I ever heard of!" said an awed scapegrace.

"It lasts the longest, too!"

"I pity you, Danvers," broke in another. "It's bad enough to have the head master for a guardian, but for a brother-in-law——!"

Here words positively failed to express the awful consequences.

"My brother-in-law!" shrieked Nigel. "I never thought of that. How dreadful! I shall have to call him Edward!"

EDITH HENRIETTA FOWLER.

EXPRESSION IN ANIMALS.

BY ALEXANDER H. JAPP, LL.D., AUTHOR OF "SOME ANIMAL THIEVES," ETC. ETC.

EXPRESSION OF RAGE IN A COCKATOO.

THE range of expression in animals is wider and much more varied than is generally believed. Not only the face, but the whole figure in many cases, tells the tale. This is true even of wild animals, if they are observed constantly and closely; but satisfactory proof of this is very easy to anyone who has domestic pets: it matters not of what sort. Birds are not generally credited with great powers of expression; but let anyone observe how, even the common canary, when once the delightful little fellow is on free terms with his master or mistress, can keep up a conversation in his own way and give language to his varied feelings by unmistakable signs and expressions. If you wish to see inquiry, curiosity, and questioning mingled in degree with surprise and wonder, suddenly show something that is new or strange to a pet canary. You will see the feathers on the top of his head rise, till what had seemed to you elegant from its length, and almost flatness, grows round and short, while the eye is turned first on the object you hold with a certain intense kind of scrutiny that, for the moment, really alters the expression of the eye, and then with the most questioning air on you, and back again. The softer hue that comes over the little dark eye, accompanied by the "tweet-tweet" on seeing you the first thing in the morning, or after you have been absent longer than usual from the room where he is, the flirting of the tail up and down, and the puffing out of the fore-part of the neck, you may not see again for a long while if you remain constantly beside him. It is his way of saying "Good-morning! I hope you're well!" or "Welcome back, dear friend; I wish you joy."

Look at a macaw or a cockatoo: how he wishes to have his poll scratched by his master. The head goes down at once under the fondling hand, and the eyes seem to close a little with the luxury of the sensation. And then observe the wholly different expression his head and face assume when some youngster has meddled with him, and put him into a rage with such a trick as none of us would tolerate —the eyes dilate, the mouth is open, and the tongue moving, the crest is raised, and even the body feathers are erected. He looks quite a different bird from what he was under the gentle and soothing hand of his master. Vanity is, no doubt, a strong feature in the cockatoo's character: and, indeed, he has been made the symbol of pride and superciliousness; but he can become very attached too, and yield himself to his master's loving treatment very gently.

We knew a gentleman who had a fine macaw, which was much attached to all the members of the household save a servant-girl, and her the bird could not endure. Her master would take the macaw off her perch, and do anything with her, and she would kiss and fondle him in the most demonstrative manner, the soft round tongue going over his lips, though one felt one would need to be sure of the bird's affection before venturing on such endearments: for that beak could crack the hardest nut with the utmost ease, and go through a hard ship's biscuit like

the sharpest steel. But when the servant-girl came the whole expression was different; the macaw would scream and hiss and set up the head feathers, or else—

A FRIGHTENED OWL.

cunning bird—she would pretend to be reconciled, that she might give all the deadlier peck; but the maid had learned to be wary. No one could in the least account for the dislike the bird had to that girl, but an expression special to the occasion was unvaried whenever the girl came near.

You would not fancy there could be much change of expression in an owl's face. But see him when he returns to his young ones with a tit-bit, and is in the act of feeding them, and then see him when he has been frightened by some strange intruder near to him or his nest. The eyes go wink, wink, wink, and then assume a strange wide-open expression, the feathers all over the body and head rise and tremble, and present the aspect of a mere bundle ill put together. The bill goes moving with a constantly clucking sound. We are told that if the owl by any chance turns out through the day, all the little birds follow and surround him, screaming, and expressing in every way their dislike; and as the owl does not see well in clear light, he tumbles about in the oddest manner, and sometimes, no doubt, puts on this strange and striking expression of fear only to make his enemies behave the more audaciously.

MINGLED ANGER AND FEAR.

But think of the dog. What a variety of expressions he has! Look at his eyes, and the lights of joy that shoot in them as he jumps round his master who has been absent longer than usual; see him when he plays with the youngsters—the "pawky" turns of expression, as a Scotchman would say, which he puts on. Some animals may fail in it, but the dog's appreciation of fun and play has often made me think that if there is anything in transmigration of souls, dogs are now inhabited by humorists.

And then the capacity for discipline, notwithstanding. I have seen a blind beggar's dog seated at the end of a stone step, with a *posse* of stray dogs gathered round him, sniffing at him, barking, and doing all they could to enlist him in their sociality and enjoyment. No; there he sits, utterly passive, faithful to his task, with a happy but demure expression in the higher sense of duty done. His little eyes would follow the dogs with no movement of a muscle beside. They speak of the discipline of the battle-field, which

GUILTY FEAR.

is so wondrously sustained by mere sense of comradeship, but the blind man's dog, *all alone*, was in this case discipline incarnate.

And when a passer-by essays to put a penny in the tin box tied under the dog's chin, and misses it, the expression of joy with which the dog jumps down, and with his mouth secures the copper, is a treat to see, and also the grand proud smile that seems to light up his eyes when he receives his blind master's appreciative pat as he drops the penny into his master's hand. There is a blind man who sits in the little passage which runs by the upper side of St. Martin's Church, making nets; and if you should pass that way and throw the dog a copper, you will see exactly what we mean. This dog is a kind of Skye-terrier—a most intelligent and faithful specimen of a good breed.

After this, who would fancy that Mrs. Barrett

Browning exaggerated the wisdom or affection of her dog Flush, whom she has twice celebrated in poetry?

But see a dog when he has been beaten by a

ANIMAL DESIRE FOR PREY.

stranger, and shrinks away from him in fear by the side of the wall—his patience exhausted, anger mingling with his fear, and intensifying instead of really modifying it—and you have a sight which the true dog-lover does not like to see. Then there is a sinister devilry in the eye, showing the white ominously, the ears thrown back, the body drawn together, and the teeth all displayed. That is one of the dog's bad quarter-hours: then he exhibits some of his worst features. You could hardly believe this was the same creature whom you saw but a short half-hour ago jumping up and licking his young master's hand in gratitude as they went out for a walk, and bounding with joy from side to side of the way, as if he could not by any means make the delightful journey long enough.

Mr. Darwin was wont to speak of the mind of man as having been developed from the mind of the lower animals, and often on that ground he doubted the real basis of many of its "convictions." As a necessity of logic, one of the conclusions of his philosophy was that conscience was merely the result of heredity and the cumulative effects of the lessons of the rod. But we ourselves have a dog—a cross between a small retriever and an otter-hound—which certainly goes as far towards suggesting a something beyond as any human being could do. You have only to speak in the softest tones of something he has done — tell in conversation to another some offence of which he has been guilty—and, though he may have been lying as if asleep on the hearth-rug, softly lifting his feet high and cautiously, as though to make no noise or attract attention to himself, he at once moves away, and hides himself beneath the sofa or anywhere else he can, till he is called forth in re-assuring tones. His master has often to leave the little country-house where he is, but poor Brin is seldom to be seen when his master actually leaves home; the moment the black bag is brought out and packing begins, he knows what is coming, and hides himself, though he hangs to his master's heels like a shadow when in other circumstances he goes out, in order to enjoy a walk with him. That dog, of a truth, has almost as many expressions as are to be seen on the faces of some of the peasants hard by.

A few years ago was published a volume called "Animal Anecdotes arranged on a New Principle." This volume had a section which went to show the existence of something very like conscience in certain animals, and some of these anecdotes—all of them verified—were widely quoted. We are distinctly of opinion that there is much not otherwise to be accounted for in intelligent and faithful dogs. A dog stricken with a sense of guilt, and fear bred of this consciousness, is one of the very finest studies for expression. The tail is thrown down and almost touches the ground: an invariable feature; the head is lowered as with a sense of weight; the eye looks round as with stealthy furtiveness. And in all cases of this conscience-smitten contrition there is a very defined expression of fear mixed with it—this although there may be no actual threat of physical punishment.

The retriever otter-hound I have already referred to will show all these expressions when merely ordered to go under the sofa; whereas, with a subtlety of cunning insight—in which, probably, no other animal equals the dog—on the few occasions when I have been momentarily a little angry with him and took the whip in my hand to chastise him, he would make this difficult by his jumping up and coming

RAGE IN AN IRISH TERRIER.

very near to me, whining for forgiveness and licking my hands, the result of which is that he generally has got off with comparatively light punishment. He literally kisses the rod and so makes the stroke lighter.

But this, I think, goes to show that what now affects him most is not the rod, but the sense of losing his master's favour, respect, and affection. If he does not clearly reason it out by definite steps and stages, his instincts are wonderfully enlightened.

With regard to the cat, there can be no doubt that her range of expression is considerable. Think of the softness of which that eye of hers shows itself capable when she has a litter of kittens to purr over, and fondle, and lick; and then the sudden transformation when a strange dog comes near—fire itself in the eye, the ears thrown back till they almost disappear, the hair

raised all over the body, the teeth all displayed, and the tail straight up, and apparently five times the size it was a moment before, while she spits and hisses out hate and defiance. Mr. Browning has noted and

RAGE IN A LIONESS.

given fine effect to this same contrast in the eagle in his powerful poem entitled "Incident in the French Camp":—

> "The chief's eye flashed; but presently
> Softened itself, as sheathes
> A film the mother-eagle's eye
> When her bruised eaglet breathes.

Or, again, look at pussy when she is busy hunting after mouse or bird: the eyes are wide open and show light strongly; the ears are very erect, if not even bent forward, so as to catch the slightest sound the more quickly; the body is lengthened out and the limbs thrown apart, so that a spring is easy any second. The main features and expressions of this position characterise all the cat tribe; and when we see our "harmless, necessary cat" in this position we see her in an act which most directly proclaims her long descent, and her kindredship with the giant members of her species. Mr. Hamerton, in his fine studies of animals, favours the idea that the cat does not have the almost moral sensitiveness that marks the dog, though in some respects her sense of touch and her perceptions are finer—at all events, quicker; but we have met with at least one case where the attachments to individuals were so strong that they overcame some of the most powerful instincts in the cat: such as going round the house in the wet for the sake of master's company. That cat's range of expression was really wonderful, as well as the attempt to keep up a conversation by mews varied through a considerable scale, and modifications of expression such as sometimes gave much amusement to visitors.

Mr. Darwin had a very odd theory that the smile on the human countenance was but a survival of the snarl in the brute progenitors in the far back ages. That was not quite so complimentary to us poor human beings as a man less severely scientific, and less disposed to follow out his own ideas to their last result might have made it; but so it was. The arguments with which Mr. Darwin sought to fortify this are not, in our opinion, so well based as some other arguments of his; but it is very odd that the Romans had what they called the "snarling letter" (*litera canina*): that is, the letter R. If you try ever so to pronounce that letter without opening the lips more or less widely, and showing the teeth more or less, you find you cannot do it. How very odd it is that both Mr. Darwin and the Romans agreed in finding some survival of the wild animals' snarl: the one in our language, the other in our smiles, which are but another and finer form of language. But really, analogy in the one case and scientific severity in the other surely went too far. As we have seen, even in the most primitive time, before man had domesticated and influenced to any extent the lower animals, the lion and the lioness looked with tender eye upon the young cubs, and could paw and fondle them and play with them; and if the smile in the human face is to be traced to any brute original, surely it should rather have found origin there, as most consistent even with the *idea* of evolution itself; and Science makes almost too bold a demand upon us when, because it finds certain muscles called into exercise, it declares that the original expression of a benevolent feeling was that of the most malevolent one. If you attend to a dog in a rage you will perceive that, if the mouth is open and the teeth displayed as in a smile on the human countenance, the eyes are very different indeed; they are charged with fierce hate, and the nerves and muscles there exercised must be very different from those called into exercise by a smile. Rage in the lion or tiger is still more emphatic on this point, if that were possible. The fierce aspect of the eye is due to the upper eyelid being drawn up as into a sharp point, and the whiskers in part raised, as if in some portion to stand up almost perpendicularly instead of standing out horizontally from the lip. The mere movement of the whisker in this direction itself greatly alters the expression.

Much might be said about the influence of man on animals in developing their power of expression. The dog does not bark, properly speaking, till he comes into contact with man, nor does he exhibit the feelings most vividly expressed by barking: joy, sense of guardianship, as well as surprise or sense of danger. In truth, domesticated animals receive a new dowry of feeling and emotion through association with man, which is almost as surprising as man's own accent in emotion and thought, and all the fine complexities of language and expression which they bring.

OUT OF THE FASHION.

By L. T. MEADE, Author of "Engaged to be Married," "Scamp and I," etc. etc.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

SYBIL was a town-bred girl; like other inhabitants of great cities she had read of country life and country dangers. The principal country danger which met her eyes in story books was Taurus, the bull. He was represented as an awful monster, a bellowing, defiant, cruel fate from which there was no escape.

She heard a low, growling bellow now, and looking round saw Jupiter, and gave herself up for lost. She uttered a piercing shriek, and, instead of attempting to run, threw herself flat down on the ground. She shut her eyes; each instant she expected the bull's horns to pierce her; she wondered how she would feel when Jupiter lifted her on those horns and flung her high in the air. Why did he not come? What was the reason?

She heard a rush, a commotion—the clatter of sticks—the sound of blows—the mingling tones of one or two manly voices, and then she was lifted tenderly from the ground, and found her head supported on a man's shoulder.

"I trust you are not hurt?" said an anxious voice.

The voice came from the throat of Mr. Purcell, the curate. Mr. Purcell's face was darkly, deeply red, and the thickly-made hand which he had slipped round Sybil's waist absolutely trembled.

"I trust—I hope you are not hurt?" he repeated; his agitation was intense.

"Oh, no, thank you," said Sybil, recovering herself. She stepped away from the encircling arm, and began hastily to twist up her refractory golden tresses. One of these tresses a moment before had rested against Mr. Purcell's cheek. She knew nothing about it, but he did, and it must be confessed he liked the sensation.

"I hope you are not hurt?" repeated Mr. Purcell.

"Oh, no, not in the least. I am very much obliged to you. Did you beat the bull and make him go back?"

"Bates and I did between us. That is Bates leading the bull through that gate now. He is the farmer who owns this field, and the bull is his. You ought not to have come in: it was very dangerous. Did you not see the board up with the words printed on it '*Beware of the Bull*'?"

"No, I did not. There was a stile here and I came through. I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Purcell."

"Oh, I'm only delighted. Perhaps I may be allowed to say that what I do for you I regard as a—a privilege."

"Thank you. I will say good-bye now; I want to finish my walk."

"But are you not going home?"

"Home? No, indeed. I am going across that common until I come to the trees on the top of that hill. Good-bye." She held out her hand.

Mr. Purcell's thick fingers touched her slim ones; she turned on her heel and was away. The next instant Mr. Purcell heard her light footsteps flying after him.

"Oh, do you know, it is too ridiculous, but my hat is gone! I can't find it anywhere! I thought it was hanging to my belt, but it is not."

Mr. Purcell became immensely interested.

"Where *can* you have left it?" he asked.

"I don't know. I walked straight from Shortlands here. I had the hat when I left the house. I took it off and fastened it to my belt. Now it is gone."

"Shall we go back together and look for it?"

"Would *you* mind going back? I want to continue my walk. I don't care in the least about wearing a hat. If you find it, you might hang it on one of the posts of the stile. *Will* you? I shall be so grateful."

Sybil scarcely waited for Mr. Purcell's mumbled reply. In another moment she was off again. She crossed the stile at the further end, and walked on the wide expanse of common until she was weary. She could not reach the three gnarled old trees, for, brave as she was, she did not want the fateful luncheon hour to see her place at table vacant.

She ran most of the way home. The hat was not waiting for her on the stile-post, but when she reached her own room she saw it lying calmly on her bed. She scarcely gave the circumstance a thought at the time, but when she went down to lunch it occurred to her as the possible reason why her aunt, uncle, and cousin looked so black.

Mr. Purcell was also at the table. He looked excessively red and awkward, and never glanced at Sybil. His place was laid at the same side with Sybil, but very far away from her. He was near Mrs. Ross, so near that he almost looked as if he were sitting in her pocket. He was considered by the parish and neighbourhood generally as Mrs. Ross's own special curate, and she had the appearance now of a dragon guarding him from some deadly peril.

When lunch was over, Sybil was requested by her uncle and aunt to remain behind. Muriel and the curate meekly left the room in company. When they disappeared, Mrs. Ross went and shut the dining-room door. Then she returned and faced the young girl.

"Sybil," she said, "your uncle and I are deeply pained. You are a disobedient, designing, forward girl. You went on the common when you were

"SHE GAVE HERSELF UP FOR LOST" (*p.* 356).

strictly forbidden to do so, and, not contented with this gross disobedience, you tried to inveigle poor Mr. Purcell into your wiles. Your uncle met him absolutely carrying your hat! He said, poor young man, that he did so by your express instructions. Sybil, you are a forward coquette. I am ashamed of you. You are no fit companion for Muriel. Go to your room and stay there, until your uncle and I decide what is best to be done with you. Go at once, my dear, and now, not a word."

"I don't want to say a word," retorted Sybil. Her eyes flashed, she banged herself out of the room.

"She is a pretty creature," said David Ross to his wife. "Not that it makes any difference in the sin, but I should not be surprised if Purcell *liked* holding her hat."

"David!" said Mrs. Ross. "I am ashamed of your even insinuating such thoughts. Samuel Purcell is an absolutely guileless man."

She left the room, and Mr. Ross retired to his study.

Upstairs Sybil was very busy.

"This decides it," she murmured to herself. "Even Mark won't keep me where I'm not wanted. Back I go to dear No. 80 this very night. Oh, another week of this awful life would have put me in a madhouse! Fancy me being accused of flirting with Mr. Purcell!"

She ran nervously about. Her trunks were dragged forward, her possessions ruthlessly thrust into them. In a short time the drawers and the wardrobe were emptied. The ugly room looked bare and desolate, for Sybil's two large trunks were full. She locked them carefully, strapped them with her own energetic hands, turned and re-directed the labels, and then sitting down on the window-ledge, opened her purse and counted its contents. These were slender, but she had enough to pay for a third-class fare to Euston. She would go, she would go that very night; her trunks might be sent after her. She would walk to the station.

She scribbled a little note and left it on her dressing-table. It was a rather impertinent little note, for Sybil's feelings were sorely outraged just then. She put on the hat which the curate's fingers had defiled, and waited until Mrs. Ross, Muriel, and Mr. Purcell went out for their drive. She sat well up on the window ledge, and watched the brougham drive swiftly round the carriage sweep. Mr. Purcell looked very uncomfortable on the little back seat, facing Mrs. Ross and Muriel; his big knees were up nearly to his chin; he was not talking, but Sybil saw he was being talked *to* and *at* with vivacity.

The carriage disappeared, and Sybil slipped softly downstairs. She let herself out at the side door, saw to her relief that the brougham was bowling away in an opposite direction, and then set out at a brisk pace

up and down the dusty hills which led from Shortlands to the little wayside station.

No one stopped her on the road. She waited some time at the station, but at last a train did come up. She entered a third-class compartment, and after what seemed like the lapse of ages found herself once more at Euston Station.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

PHILIPPA and Clarissa found the "good time" at the boarding-house which followed late dinner, a very excellent time indeed. These were the couple of hours in the day allotted to songs and innocent mirth-making. The girls could ask their young men friends to visit them then, and the young men were very glad to come.

Philippa was the sort of girl to enter warmly into Miss Power's scheme. Her voice and Clarissa's were decided acquisitions to the music, and the new girls, notwithstanding their serge dresses, bade fair to become some of the most popular of the party.

This happened the first night. The second night the fun and frolic and joviality were even greater than the first. Miss Danby and Miss Marmaduke might have lived all their lives at No. 80, so at home were they with the ways of the house, and the manners of its inhabitants. They had provided themselves with tea-gowns—cheap tea-gowns, but pretty. Clarissa's was of a soft, pearly shade of blue, Philippa's was white.

The weather was too cold now for the balcony windows to be open, but the light from the gay drawing-room flickered out through the crevices of the blinds, and hailed with a warm glow of welcome a travel-stained girl, who, about nine o'clock that evening, drove up to the door.

She ran up the steps, and gave the bell a loud, familiar peal. A strange servant opened the door to her.

"Is Miss Ross in?" asked Sybil. "You need not say I've come. I'd rather run up to my room, and make myself tidy first."

The servant looked bewildered.

"But, if you please, miss, the house is quite full."

"Oh, thank you; perhaps it is to others, but not to me. I am Sybil Ross, one of the young ladies. Don't tell anyone I've come, please. I'll go to Kitty's room: I know the way."

"They are all in the drawing-room now, miss. Shall I take you to Miss Kitty's room, miss—Miss Sybil?"

The maid had heard of Sybil; she had also seen her photograph occupying a place of honour in most rooms in the house. This young country maid was of a romantic turn. She felt inclined to worship Sybil's dancing eyes, and piquant face, and would have done anything in her power to aid her.

"If you come softly this way, Miss Sybil, no one will hear us."

She took Sybil to Kitty's new room, provided her with hot water, turned up the gas, and left her. Sybil danced about. She was in an ecstasy at being home again; the idea of being kissed in a moment or two by Maggie, Kitty, and Betty was bliss to her hungry heart.

Kitty's garments very nearly fitted Sybil. She ruthlessly pulled out of its cupboard Kitty's very choicest evening dress, and slipped it on. The dress was grey, but of so pale a shade that it looked almost white. Sybil fastened a silver girdle round her waist, shook out her radiant hair, pinned it up more untidily than it had ever been pinned before, and then half-laughing, half-defiant, her eyes brimful of mirth, and yet with tears not very far off, her cheeks flushed with the bloom of the deepest rose, she stepped along the corridor, threw open the drawing-room door, and came in.

They were all standing round the piano when she entered, and a wave of sweet melody, and words she had heard before rushed to meet her.

"With the sunshine and the swallows and the flowers
She is coming, my belovèd, o'er the sea,
And I sit alone and count the weary hours
Till she cometh in her beauty back to me!
And my heart will not be quiet
But in a purple riot
Keeps ever beating, beating—
At the thought of that sweet meeting,
When she cometh, my belovèd, home to me."

The crowd was so great round the piano that at first the slim figure, who softly, all smiles and blushes, walked up the room, was not noticed.

The song came to an end; there was an eager chorus of applause, girls and young men divided to right and left, and Sybil saw a girl, as young as herself and nearly as pretty, seated at the piano, and playing the finale to her gay accompaniment.

A man was bending over the girl, a man with an upright and graceful figure, and a smooth dark head. It was from the lips of this man that the glad passionate words of welcome had floated down to Sybil.

She could not help giving a little cry. She found it impossible to remember anyone else in the drawing-room: Maggie, Kitty, Betty, even, were forgotten. She rushed to the piano, said "Mark!" and held out her two hands.

For an instant Mark Danby wavered, Sybil might be an apparition, so sudden was her appearance. Then he looked into her eyes, and the love which was the truest thing about him mastered all other feelings. He stooped down and kissed Sybil on her lips before everyone in the room.

A lover's kiss given in public generally causes some consternation. The girls who were boarding in the house turned away and took up something to do, and tried to believe they had seen nothing. The young men began to wonder if they ought to go. Clarissa turned white, and looked at Philippa; Philippa's eyes almost blazed. She took Clarissa's hand and led her across the drawing-room.

"Come," she said, "let us sit down in this corner, and rest until we recover ourselves. I'm stunned, aren't you?"

"I don't know," replied Clarissa, in a dreary voice. The colour did not return to her cheeks.

"Clari, dear Clari, *don't* tell me that you care."

"Of course I don't, Philippa, only it's sudden, isn't it?"

"I don't suppose it's sudden at all. Kitty didn't look the least astonished, and I saw Betty's eyes dance. Look here, Clari, shall we slip out of the house, and go over and see Jessica. She'll tell us all about this; she'll let us know what it means."

"Very well," said Clarissa. The girls stole upstairs, put on their waterproof cloaks, and let themselves out into the square.

As they were walking across it, Clarissa said not aloud, but in very strong, forcible language to her own heart:

"Now you're not going to be silly about this. You never were, you know, one scrap in love with Mark. Of course, you could not have been in love with him."

But the refrain of the song she had just been listening to came back to her, and that refrain, notwithstanding her bravery, made her feel a little sick.

Miss Power was at home, and in a moment the two girls found themselves in her cosy drawing-room. Clarissa sank down into the first chair, and remained silent. Philippa knelt by Jessica's side, and poured out her story.

"We made Mark come up to-night," said Philippa, "we made an appointment to meet him at the Grove, and then we got him to promise to come. At first he did not seem to like it very much, but then he gave way, and said he would come. Kitty and Betty and Maggie took his coming as a matter of course. After dinner we had what Betty calls our good time. It was a very good time indeed to-night. We all felt music-mad; I wonder you did not hear the noise we made across the Square."

"Won't Clarissa come nearer the fire?" suddenly interrupted Miss Power. "You look quite cold and white, my love. Here is a cosy little chair for you; do take it."

"Oh, I'm not a bit cold," said Clarissa, jumping up. She took the fresh seat, however, and tried to toast her white cheeks at the fire.

"Now Philippa, go on," said Miss Power.

"We sang glees and quartettes, and trios until we were tired," proceeded Philippa. "Then Clarissa sat down and played an accompaniment for Mark, and Mark sang alone. You know what a caressing voice Mark has, Jessica?"

"No, my love, I can't say I do."

"Well, he has. When he sings I often shut my eyes, and say to myself, 'Now, Marky, suppose you were *not* my brother!'"

Clarissa moved restlessly at the fire.

"Well, Mark does sing very well," proceeded Philippa, resuming her matter-of-fact tone, "and the song he sang to-night was about his love coming back to him, and he really *did* sing it as if he were very much in love. He had just finished the words, and there was a little pause in the room, when suddenly a girl we had never seen before, a very, very pretty girl, rushed into our midst, and took hold of Mark's two hands, and looked into his face with the very sweetest, loveliest light in her own, and said 'Mark!'—and, Jessica, Mark stooped down, and kissed the girl on her lips. Yes, he did, before everyone. Clarissa and I have come over, Jessica, to ask what it all means."

"Why, my dear Philippa," replied Miss Power, "it's quite plain what it all means. Little Nineteen-year-old has come back."

"Good gracious! Who in the world is Little Nineteen-year-old?"

"Darling little Sybil, the youngest sister, the prettiest of them all, and one of the wisest, too, with the exception of one nonsensical idea of hers."

"Well, of course I'm not acquainted with the Ross family intimately, so I cannot be supposed to know their idiosyncrasies," answered Philippa somewhat haughtily. "But I cannot see why 'darling little Sybil' should rush up to Mark and kiss him."

"My dear, he kissed her."

"Well, allow herself to be kissed by him: it's all the same."

"Wouldn't you kiss your betrothed, if you met him suddenly, Philippa? Ay, and forget all the world beside when you looked into his face?"

"Is Sybil engaged to Mark, then?"

"Of course she is—she has been engaged to him for the last two months."

"Then why don't we know? Why is my mother kept in ignorance? Why am I allowed to remain in the dark?"

"My dear Philippa, Mark himself must answer those questions."

"He shall, and to-night, too," replied Philippa, rising to her feet. "I think we have been treated shamefully. Do you think we would have come to stay at that house if we had known that anything of that sort was going on? Jessica, I wonder you did not tell us."

"My dear, how could I possibly tell you did not know? But as we are speaking of the matter now, I may as well own I never did approve of the match."

"Oh, you don't think her good enough for Mark? Well, no wonder."

"On the contrary, I don't think Mark half good enough for her."

Both the girls said "Oh!" this time, and Clarissa sprang to her feet.

"Had we not better go back to No. 80 now, Philippa?" she said.

"Yes, we'll go," said Philippa. "Good-night, Jessica; I'm sorry you did not give us a hint; for as you know Mark so well, and think so little of him, you might have guessed he would try to deceive us."

Miss Power rose, and put her two hands on Philippa's shoulders.

"You are angry now, dear," she said. "And now I must admit you have much reason to be angry. When you offered to come to No. 80, I thought it very probable that you knew nothing of Mark's engagement, and I must own that I felt a sense of

satisfaction in thinking that the truth would probably reach your ears while you stayed there. It was not my place to reveal your brother's secrets, but now that he has let them out himself, you can say anything you please to him. You are not likely to part him from Sybil, however, and there are many reasons which make me regret that your powers are so limited. Good-night, dear. Come and see me in the morning if you like; and if I *can* do anything to help you to lay the switch about Mark's shoulders, I shall be more than happy. Good-night, Clarissa."

"'YOU WANT TO MARRY THIS YOUNG WOMAN,' HE SAID" (*p.* 362).

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

NOTWITHSTANDING her agitation and anger, Philippa slept soundly all through that night. Clarissa was the one who stayed awake. Sleep fled from her wide-open eyes, and thoughts, busy and anxious, crowded into her active brain.

Clarissa was the petted heiress, the darling of her home and neighbourhood, an acknowledged beauty, too. Clarissa possessed a triple gift—birth, beauty, fortune—surely everything she wished for could be hers.

Everything she desired had up to the present come at her bidding. Now for the first time in her whole life, she was conscious of having received a direct slap in the face. She received this blow when Mark took Sybil's hands and kissed her.

Clarissa remained for nearly half the night struggling with her own mortified feelings. She had by no means made up her mind whether she would marry Mark, but for over a year now she had been quite sure, quite absolutely positive, that Mark would wish to marry her. She thought that in all the world she was the girl who stood first in his affections. She was not violently in love with him, but his attentions gave her pleasure, his words interested her, the fervent glance he favoured her with now and then caused her heart to beat agreeably—she knew, as well as he did, that he had only to say the word to arouse deeper and stronger feelings within her.

Now that word would never be spoken. Clarissa lay in her humble little bed under the eaves in the

attic bedroom and wept. Her tears flowed noiselessly and easily. Had she felt more deeply she might not have cried at all.

All during the early part of the night, Clarissa thought of the slap she had received, but towards morning her meditations took another turn. She became anxious that Mark should not have that switch laid across his shoulders.

Philippa had spoken angrily of a rod lying up in pickle for her darling Marky, but Clarissa wished the rod to be taken out of pickle. Then, from tender thoughts of Mark, who had all her life been her favourite cousin, this kind-hearted creature began to think of the girl who had rushed into the midst of the charmed circle last night. The girl's face was pretty, pretty and yet worn, with that pathetic look of wear which only adds to the beauty of very early youth. The eyes that gazed into Mark's were no strangers to tears, the full, rosy lips appealed both to pity and to love.

Clarissa was attracted by this girl, and in the morning she got up, pale and heavy-eyed, it is true, but with her wise and kind little brain teeming with thoughts.

"We'll go away to-day," said Philippa, as she took turns with her cousin to arrange her hair before the small looking-glass.

"Yes," answered Clarissa, "but I must see Sybil first."

"What—'the darling little Sybil'? Do you want to see more of her? I must own it is not what I do."

"I should like to see her again," answered Clarissa, in a meek voice.

Philippa looked hard at her cousin's back; she was not permitted to view her face; and a few seconds afterwards the two girls went downstairs together.

The greater number of the girls who boarded in the house had left the breakfast-room when Philippa and Clarissa entered. These girls had gone about their daily avocations, some to Schools of Art, some to the Musical Academies, some to teach, some to be taught. The Rosses, however, were still in the breakfast-room, and Maggie smiled at her guests, and made them welcome when they tripped in.

Philippa responded coldly to Maggie's greeting. She sat down at the breakfast-table, helped herself to cold toast, and steadily ignored the delicious hot muffins which Kitty was pushing in her direction. Sybil was in the room; she had borrowed another of Kitty's frocks, and Clarissa saw that her fresh, softly-rounded face looked even prettier by daylight than candle-light.

Sybil's eyes were brimful of mirth and happiness, and Clarissa noticed that her sisters could not make enough of her.

When the meal was over Philippa rose and went up to speak to Maggie. Now was Clarissa's chance. She was a remarkably gentle girl, and had seldom taken any initiative step before. The colour flushed all over her face as she stepped up to Sybil and taking her hand, said in a low, sweet voice—

"I heard last night that you were engaged to Mark. Let me congratulate you."

Sybil flushed more brightly even than Clarissa.

"Are you Mark's cousin Clarissa?" she whispered back.

"Yes, and his sister Philippa is here. She is talking to your sister; come and speak to her with me."

Clarissa took Sybil's hand.

"Philippa," she said, touching her tall cousin with a slight, half-beseeching movement, "this is Sybil."

"How do you do?" said Philippa.

She took Sybil's hand, and held it in a light, limp fashion, then dropping it, she turned to Maggie.

"My cousin and I must leave to-day. Will you kindly have our accounts sent to our room." Then, without again glancing at Sybil, she left the dining-room.

A few moments later Clarissa rushed into the attic bedroom.

"Philippa," she said, "I am going to stay at 80, Rosemary Gardens, for the present. I have spoken to Maggie. I don't want to go back to Ashton Manor to-day."

"Now, Clarissa, what *is* the meaning of this?"

"I am going to see if I cannot help Sybil and Mark," continued Clarissa, in a steady voice. "Sybil is a very pretty girl, and very nice, and she loves Mark with all her heart, and I should like them to be married. You can go back, Philippa, and scold Mark, but I shall stay here and help him."

Philippa looked hard at her cousin.

"Clarissa," she said, after a long pause, "you are an angel, but the aggravation of your goodness nearly maddens me. Why can't you be ordinary and vindictive in this matter?"

"What have I to be vindictive about?" asked Clarissa, rearing her slight little neck in a very royal style.

"Oh, well, nothing, I suppose. Stay if you want to, Clari. I assure you, you'll be the reverse of a comfort to me at Ashton Manor at present. I feel diabolical, and you are angelic, and the farther apart we are for the time being, the better. A nice, pleasant, cheerful period I am likely to have with my beloved mother and Mark for the next few days. One tugging me one way, and the other, the other—and all on account of that 'darling little Sybil.' There, I hate her, I can't help it."

Philippa left by an early train. As soon as ever she was gone, Clarissa sat down in her attic bedroom, and wrote a letter to her father:

"80, *Rosemary Gardens*,
"*October* 24.

"DEAREST FATHER,—I am in the most delightful boarding-house in the world. It is kept by three girls, real ladies. They won't admit gentlemen boarders, or you ought to come, and never leave it. Oh, it's quite a heavenly place; I came here two days ago, with Philippa Danby. Mark came to see us last night, and what do you think? We had a delicious little

denoûment in the drawing-room. Mark was singing, and I was playing his accompaniment. He was singing a love-song. You know what a *nice* voice he has, and he sang about hearts, and riots, and meetings, and all that sort of thing, you know! Of course, you will laugh at them, but I expect you liked them well enough when mother was a young girl!

"Well, he had scarcely finished singing, when in rushed his lady-love. She was in silvery grey, and her face was just lovely. She took his hands, and he looked at her, and then *he kissed her—before a whole roomful of people!* Mark has been engaged for two months to Sybil Ross, the sister of the girls who keep the boarding-house. Mark would not allow her to help to keep it, but he sent her away to a dreadful old uncle, who kept a bull and a curate, and who stole her hats. I can't quite make out that part of the story, but anyhow, Sybil could not bear either the uncle or the curate, and so she ran away, and came back to London. Father, she is just the wife for Mark, and he is *so* fond of her. Philippa and Aunt Jane, I know, will oppose the match, but you have no silly, false pride. Father, try and get Mark something to do.

"Your loving daughter,

"CLARISSA.

"P.S.—I shall be here for the next few days, so you can write or wire about Mark's appointment when you have got this."

Clarissa's father was at Brighton now, and she calculated he would receive this important letter by the evening post, at the latest. If he wrote by return, which she hoped he might do, she ought to get a letter by the following morning.

None came, which disappointed her, but immediately after breakfast a yellow envelope was thrust into her hand.

"The answer is prepaid, miss," said the maid, standing before Clarissa.

She tore the yellow envelope open, with trembling fingers.

"Will Uncle Joe's agency do?" was scrawled on the pink paper inside.

Clarissa, with trembling fingers, wrote one word on the prepaid reply:—"Splendid!"

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

CLARISSA'S father sent off his telegram, then he came and sat with his wife in her boudoir.

"My dear," he said after a time, "I don't think anything has ever given me more relief than that letter of Clari's last night. I may as well confess to you that I lived in hourly dread of the post bringing me the child's announcement that she was herself engaged to Mark Danby."

"And, my love," responded Mrs. Marmaduke, raising her handsome, somewhat inert face, "had Clarissa so written we would have been obliged to say Yes; for, you know, we always made up our minds that we would never oppose Clari's and Vi's love affairs."

"Well, thank goodness, the danger is past," said Mr. Marmaduke. "The dear girl had evidently only the most cousinly regard for Mark, and now, seeing that he is my own nephew, I am bound to help him all I can. I can't say that he takes my fancy, but he wouldn't be a bad sort of fellow if his mother could only make up her mind to leave him alone. What do you say, Henrietta, my dear? Shall I go to town by the next train and see Clari?"

"Yes, and for goodness' sake bring the child home, George; don't leave her in that queer boarding-house by herself."

Mr. Marmaduke laughed.

"I can't promise anything," he said. "I'll see how things really appear. The child speaks well of the place, and she has a wise little head on her pretty shoulders."

Mr. Marmaduke arrived at No. 80, Rosemary Gardens, that evening, in time to enjoy a very sociable cup of afternoon tea. Three of the Ross girls were present. One poured out his tea, another helped him to cream and sugar (he took both), and a third supplied him with brown bread and butter cut to perfection.

He thought the three Miss Rosses quite ladylike young women, and invited Kitty down to Brighton to stay with Clarissa and Violet.

After the meal was over, this good man had first an interview with Clarissa, then with Mark, and, lastly, Sybil was introduced to him. It was in Sybil's presence that the Hon. George Marmaduke made Mark Danby a substantial offer.

"You want to marry this young woman," he said, looking straight into his nephew's eyes.

Mark coloured all over his dark face.

"Yes, sir, I do, if she will have me," he said.

"And you want to marry my nephew?" continued Mr. Marmaduke, nodding to Sybil.

"Yes, sir, if he will have me," she answered. Then she took Clarissa's hand and squeezed it hard.

"And what income have you to marry on?" continued Mr. Marmaduke, looking again at Mark.

"I'm afraid I have not any, sir."

"H'm. You doubtless have an equivalent to no income—debts?"

"I do owe some money, Uncle George."

"I might have known that. How much?"

"Three hundred pounds would cover everything, sir."

"On your honour?"

"Yes, sir, on my honour."

Mr. Marmaduke said "H'm!" twice, very loudly.

"You love this girl, nephew?" he said, then.

"Yes," answered Mark.

His "Yes" was so full of meaning, that Sybil quite hurt Clarissa's hand the way she squeezed it.

"You are reading for the law?" continued Mr. Marmaduke.

"Yes."

"Well, now, I'll tell you what it is. If I were you I'd give up the law, or at any rate the special branch you are preparing for. I doubt your ever doing much at the bar. Anyhow it would be weary waiting to

marry on what you made, and somehow Clarissa and I don't want this young girl to have to wait an interminable time. I tell you what I'll do for you, Mark. I'll pay your debts and start you clear, and I'll give you a letter to my wife's brother, Joseph Symington. He wants a likely young fellow like yourself to act as agent to his property in Cornwall. You would have, of course, to live there, and would have a small income to start with—say, four hundred a year. Would this be agreeable to you?"

Mark's face had turned very white. He looked at Sybil, at Clarissa, at his uncle.

"I don't deserve it," he murmured.

Sybil rushed forward and clasped Mr. Marmaduke's hand.

"I don't know how to thank you," her eyes said. Her trembling lips tried to say the words, but they failed.

"Well, it's all settled, my dear," said Mr. Marmaduke; "and as you'll be my niece soon, you may as well give me a kiss."

At this moment the important conference was interrupted by a slight but imperative tap at the room door. Before Sybil had time to go and open it Miss Power walked in.

"How do you do?" she said, shaking hands with Mr. Marmaduke. Then she added before anyone had time to utter a word: "I know what you are all talking about. You, Clarissa, and you, George, are trying to smooth matters for your cousin and nephew, Mark Danby. He has set his heart on marrying Sybil Ross. He is remarkably lucky in his choice, and as his relatives, it is undoubtedly your bounden duty to prevent his losing the luck which he will certainly have when he unites himself to this young girl. Come here, Sybil dear: give me your hand. The Bible says," continued Miss Power, "that the price of a good woman is above rubies. When Mark marries Sybil he will have united himself to a lady, and a beautiful as well as a good girl. What can any man want more? Mark, I wish you luck. Shake hands."

Miss Power wrung Mark's hands in a very hearty manner. Then she turned to Sybil and kissed her.

"My love," she said, "you are motherless, and on this occasion, I mean to act as a mother to you. You shall be married from my house, and I will give you your trousseau. In addition to this, I mean to make you a present of two thousand pounds. This is by no means a fortune, Sybil, but it will give you a little certain income quite independent of your husband—for I warrant you, my dear, I shall see it securely settled on you. Now you four good people can go on with your conference. I have said my say, and I must go."

* * * * *

"I might have guessed it," said Philippa; "I was a great fool to be so taken unawares. I might have known that Marky wouldn't hide letters morning after morning for nothing. Oh, my dear mamsey, for goodness' sake don't begin to cry again! My nerves really won't stand it."

Lady Jane took a limp handkerchief out of her pocket. This she applied pathetically to her eyes. Then she turned and plaintively examined the contents of a silver salver near her side.

"Four letters have arrived by the afternoon's post, Philippa," she said; "here they are. I haven't opened one of them, for I know they are all about that detestable girl."

"But they must be read," said Philippa in her practical voice. "Let me look at them. This one is from Mark. Shall I read it to you, motherie?"

"If you like, my love."

"Dear me, I don't like it a bit, mams, but what can't be cured: now, then—here goes——" Philippa tore open the letter, and read the following words aloud:

"80, *Rosemary Gardens,*
October 26.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am the happiest fellow in the world. Uncle George has behaved like a real old Briton. He is setting me on my feet, for I will confess that I did owe for one or two little matters——"

"Good gracious! The wicked ungrateful boy was in debt, as well as everything else!" screamed Lady Jane.

"Now, motherie, *do* let me go on reading:

"——Uncle George has set me on my feet, and he has got me the Symington agency, which you know I was always dying for. Sybil and I are to be married as soon as possible. I know you will love her when you see her—I long to introduce her to you,"——

"H'm—h'm. I needn't read the rest," continued Philippa, "it's rhapsody."

She took up another of the letters.

"This is from Jessica Power," she said. She proceeded to open the envelope:

"80, *Rosemary Gardens,*
October 26.

"MY DEAR JANE,—I congratulate you. Your son has secured a charming girl for his wife. She is to be married from my house, and I am going to settle two thousand pounds strictly on herself.

"Yours sincerely,
"JESSICA POWER."

"This," continued Philippa, "is from Clarissa; I know the kind of sentiments she is likely to put into a letter at present, so I decline to read it until I feel less aggravated. And this is from Uncle George. Now then, worthy uncle, what are your remarks on the situation?"

The crackling of paper was heard for an instant, then a loud exclamation from Philippa.

"Oh, good gracious, mamsey, do hearken to this!

"80, *Rosemary Gardens.*

"(How I hate the sound of that address!)

"MY DEAR SISTER,—Mark is a lucky fellow. He has secured a charming girl for his wife—a modest,

ladylike, nice creature. This is just a line to tell you that Clarissa and I, and Mark and Sybil are all coming down to dine with you this evening. We shall arrive by the 5.40 train.

"Your affectionate brother,
"GEORGE MARMADUKE."

"My dear Philippa!" exclaimed Lady Jane, "there isn't a thing in the house for dinner!"

"My dear mamsey, for goodness' sake, don't lose your head. I'll fly round to the butcher's, and the fishmonger's, and the greengrocer's, and to Johnson the grocer, and order in supplies."

"Yes, oh, yes—but Philippa——"

"Yes, yes, mamsey, but hadn't you better see the cook?"

"I will, I will, but Philippa, one moment——"

"*What* is it? I really must fly round to——"

"Oh, *won't* you let me speak? How are we to receive her?"

"Who? There are four people coming."

"Philippa, you are enough to distract anyone. How am I to receive Sybil—my new daughter that is to be?"

"Put your arms round her, and call her *that*, motherie, and all will be well. As to me, I'll just say: 'Here you are, darling little Sybil!' Oh, of course we must make the best of it. Now, if there's going to be any dinner, I must fly!"

THE END.

HOW WE FARED IN MANX-LAND.

A HINT FROM 1891.

S long ago as the previous Christmas when we "broke up," for that festive season, Elsie and I determined that, when the next long vacation came, we would spend it together. Staunch friends as we had been during the three years we had lived in London as art-students, we had never yet put our friendship to the test of constant holiday companionship, but now that circumstances enabled us to do so we gladly availed ourselves of the chance. And when the last Friday in July arrived, gleefully we wended our way to our lodgings, put the finishing touches to our packing, and then sat down with sighs of relief to discuss our plans for the hundredth time, and talk of all the work we should do in the happy nine weeks that lay before us.

Many and long had been our deliberations as to the place we should visit, first one and then another being weighed in the balance and found wanting, or, if the place was not, our purses were: strict economy being an essential factor for both of us. Finally, we had decided upon Port —— a quiet fishing-village in the Isle of Man, it having been recommended to us by an artist friend, who painted there a couple of years ago, as a distinctly picturesque place, where we should be lodged reasonably, and not be annoyed by the "trippers" who yearly crowd Douglas and Ramsey.

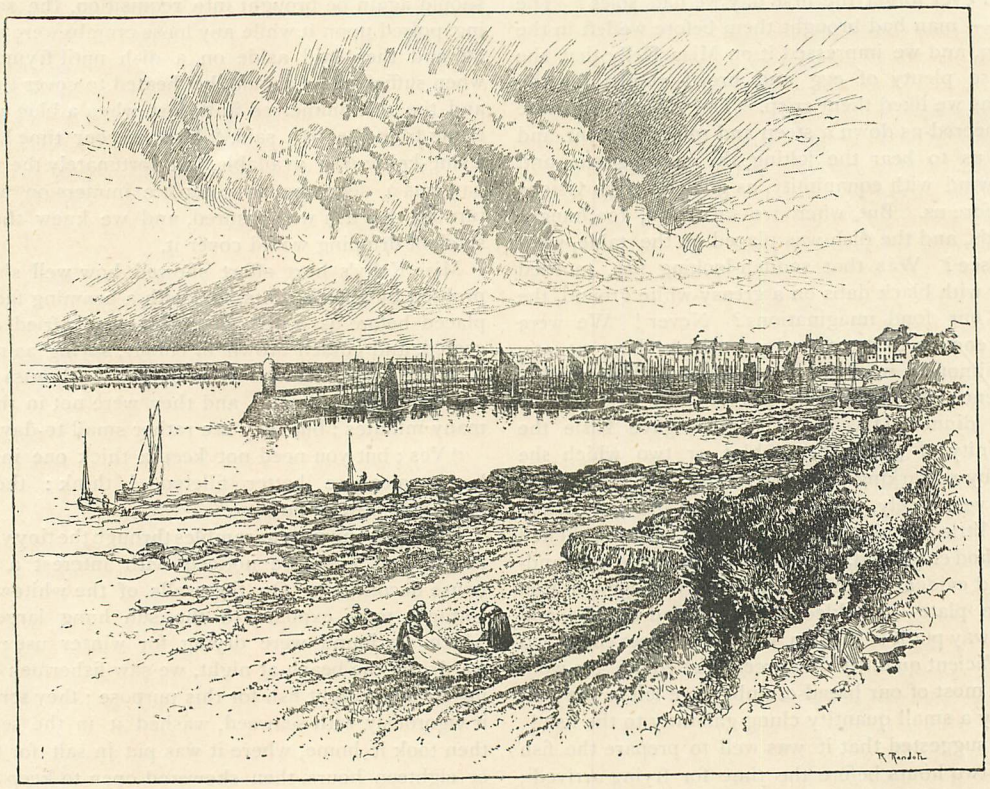
Arrived in the island, we were borne along to Port —— in the narrowest, slowest, most erratic, and good-natured little train that ever puffed its way along. Whichever way we turned, fresh pictures met the eye; woodland scenery only seemed scantily represented on the island, save for an occasional spinney, the fresh green of which served to heighten the surrounding colours. Long before we reached our destination we were busy in fancy with pencil and brush, painting pictures which kept us occupied until we woke with a start to find ourselves at Port ——.

Tired as we were, we did not hurry down the straggling village street, but noted its features with interested eyes, as one gazes on a fresh acquaintance with whom one is to spend some weeks in close companionship. Then we found Miss Kelly's house (where our friend had stayed, and we had secured rooms), and its mistress waiting to receive us. We were soon quite at home with her; she is a genuine Manx woman, kind-hearted, good-tempered, and most obliging. Throughout our stay she invariably responded "Yes, sure!" to anything we asked, and assented to every remark —no matter of how positive a nature—by saying "I believe so."

Tea over, we sallied forth to inspect the place, and do the necessary shopping. We had not known exactly how we should fare at Port —— from a gastronomical point of view, so brought with us a few tinned articles, dried fruits of various kinds, tea, coffee, etc. We might have spared ourselves the trouble, as we found on inspecting "The Public Stores," where Port —— visitors may find groceries and provisions, boots and stationery, photographs and fishing tackle, a circulating library, perfumes, and oil lamps, all mixed up in the most delightful jumble.

Although we should not have welcomed an exclusive fish diet, we intended it to occupy an important place in our daily fare, congratulating ourselves upon the amount of brain power we should acquire thereby. So Miss Kelly was early consulted as to the kind of fish we could obtain. She told us that most of that caught by the Port —— fleet was sent straight to Douglas, and that visitors were dependent upon surplus supplies, which were hawked round the village. These supplies consisted chiefly of herrings, mackerel, and carp.

We found the herring more appetising than any herrings we had tasted; they were either cooked in the frying-pan or on the gridiron, having been scored across with a knife several times, and as they were always served quite brown and crisp, the flesh came from the bones very readily.



WHERE WE STAYED IN MANX-LAND.

(*From a photograph by Messrs. Poulton & Son, Lee, S.E.*)

With fear and trembling we ventured upon the notoriously indigestible mackerel, and found it—probably from its perfect freshness—as easily assimilated as the herring itself. We tried it plainly steamed (a most digestible way), with parsley sauce, and also cooked by the following method, which was quite new to me, and gives a delicious dish. Elsie suggested it, and asked permission to prepare it.

Having cut open and cleaned two mackerel, Elsie dried them well, and pulled out the back-bones, then laid one skin downwards on a greased baking-tin, and sprinkled it with a handful of bread-crumbs, then with salt and pepper, a teaspoonful of chopped parsley, and half as much thyme rubbed into fine powder, next a *hint* of onion chopped as small as the parsley. On this went the second fish, sandwich fashion; and as Elsie pressed them together Miss Kelly (who, with me, was watching operations) exclaimed:

"Well, miss, I've *never* seen stuffing made without fat in before!"

"That is odd," replied Elsie, "considering that it was during a short stay in Ramsey that I was shown this very method. The stuffing is not of the ordinary kind; it is made dry, because a mackerel contains so much oil that it would be too rich if fat were added. I shall just cover it with a paper spread with a little butter to keep it from burning, and if your erratic little oven will behave itself, and keep at this nice moderate heat, in half-an-hour, or rather more, we can 'dish up.' I know you'll make the gravy for us, for there's nothing to do but to rinse out the tin with about half a cup of vinegar mixed with a teaspoonful of flour, and give it a boil up for five minutes: that is to cook the flour, and take away the sharpness from the vinegar."

For mackerel we generally paid twopence each, but on one occasion they were sold at thirty a shilling!

Carp was a fish with which we were previously unacquainted, rather dark in flesh and very strong in flavour. We did not appreciate it as cooked in the native way, which is to stuff it with bread-crumbs, parsley, onion, cloves, and a little fat, bake, and serve with brown gravy. Elsie, who prides herself on her culinary knowledge, suggested to Miss Kelly that it would be better gently boiled and served with sauce, and certainly the strong flavour was minimised by that method. But later on we found that an onion, a bunch of herbs, some grated horse-radish, and a bay-leaf were the things to add to the water for boiled carp, and we asked Miss Kelly to rub the back-bone of the fish with salt, and to wash it with vinegar and water, rinsing most thoroughly with clean water again and again; and a sauce of ordinary plain melted butter, flavoured with anchovy essence and lemon-juice proved a very enjoyable one.

Can I ever forget the first day we had soles? The Port —— man had brought them before we left in the morning, and we impressed it on Miss Kelly that she must use plenty of egg and bread-crumbs for the frying, as we liked them crisp. The thought of those soles cheered us down a steep and rough descent, and helped us to bear the jolting, the burning sun, and strong wind with equanimity, as golden-brown visions rose before us. But when we sat down, too hungry for words, and the dish was placed on the table, what did we see? Was that sodden-looking fish, mottled all over with black dabs on a greasy-white ground, the sole of our fond imaginations? Never! We were hungry enough to eat it, and we criticised as we ate, magnanimously resolving that as it was Miss Kelly's first offence, we would forgive her.

After dinner Miss Kelly herself gave Elsie the opportunity of giving her a hint or two which she sought by remarking that she feared she hadn't fried the sole very nicely, it was so long since she had cooked one. A little skilful questioning from Elsie soon elicited the method employed. After washing the sole, our landlady had evidently just dabbled it in the egg—beaten up on a plate—sprinkled it with bread-crumbs, and straightway put it in the pan, which doubtless contained an insufficient quantity of scarcely melted fat. No wonder that most of our bread-crumbs were left in the pan, and only a small quantity clung gallantly to the fish!

Elsie suggested that it was well to prepare the fish at least two hours before the time for frying arrived; that, after washing, it should be thoroughly dried and dredged with flour; that the egg should be carefully brushed all over it, the sole being held on a skewer during the process; that the bread should be grated (for the house did not boast a sieve), and spread on a large sheet of paper; that the fish should be laid gently on this bed of crumbs, and the paper taken up by the four corners, and shaken until the upper surface of the sole was well covered; that the skewer should again be brought into requisition, the sole being poised upon it while any loose crumbs were shaken off, and then laid aside on a dish until frying time, when sufficient fat should be heated to cover the fish, and the sole immersed in it just when a blue vapour rising from the pan said, "Now is your time!" No frying-kettle was available, but fortunately the frying-pan was a deep one, so complete immersion without turning the fish was assured, and we knew that our stock of dripping would cover it.

Miss Kelly's next effort showed how well she had profited by Elsie's hints, for, with a beaming face, she placed before us a dish of soles crisply fried, evenly coated, and golden brown in colour, saying as she set it on the table, "It was just as you said, miss: they did turn brown directly, and they were not in the pan many minutes; but they are rather small to-day."

"Yes; but you need not keep a thick one in long; large soles are better filleted, I think: they are cooked in next to no time."

During our numerous rambles through the tiny villages round Port ——, we noticed with interest a novel house decoration. On the walls of the whitewashed cottages most exposed to the sun hung large fish, which we found were drying for winter use; afterwards, on the beach at night, we saw fishermen cleaning freshly-caught fish for this purpose; they scrubbed it vigorously with seaweed, washed it in the sea, and then took it home, where it was put in salt for twelve or eighteen hours, then skewered open to keep it flat, and hung up to dry, to serve in lieu of bacon during the winter. The fish chiefly cured in this way are large haddock, ling, cod, and conger eel. Pieces are cut out of them as required, soaked for an hour or two if too salt, and then broiled, grilled, or fried. When the supply of herrings is too plentiful for consumption while fresh, they are also cleaned—but not opened flat—and salted down in a tub for future use.

DEBORAH PLATTER.

THE YEAR'S JEWELS.

BY M. C. GILLINGTON.

EMERALD: MAY.

Discovers false witnesses.

WHEN sycamore blossoms grew long in the lane,
And boughs were white with May,
I heard a song of a soul in pain,
That pierced through the dawning day.
"O, green wood-world! green leaf! green tree!
Yours is never a home for me;
My heart is sad as a heart can be,
Sorely, sorely."

The young leaves laugh as the wind runs by,
The cowslips curtsey and bend;
The cool boughs echo the passionate cry
That tells of a love at end.
"O, green wood-world! green leaf! green tree!
What should sever us, I and he?
What were the words that were told of me,
Falsely, falsely?"

The daffodil swords prick forth full strong,
The arrowhead ivies peer,
The wild birds come with a welcome song
To greet the sweet of the year.
"O, green wood-world! green leaf! green tree!
Whisper now of a place to flee,
Where I may bury my woe with me,
Surely, surely!"

EARLY SUMMER AT HOLLYBUSH MANOR.

BY AN AMATEUR GARDENER.

CHARLES MERRIMAN had been gone nearly a week from Hollybush, and the fact was a load off the mind of good Mr. John Singleton; and it may be added that his niece Amy shared in the relief that her uncle experienced, for of late she had quite realised the importance of the situation in so far as it affected her merry, but somewhat giddy, sister Nelly. Not altogether at their ease, however, as yet, were Mr. Singleton and Amy, for both had noticed, though they feigned not to do so, a certain pensive silence in the young lady, accompanied at times with a suspicion of peevishness, which with on more than one occasion an unmistakable redness about the eyes, had been very suggestive of a few tears in secret.

"Time is a great consoler, my dear," said Mr. Singleton one morning to his good Amy, in a half-amused strain, for he could not repress his buoyancy of spirits when he recollected that the original cause of the disturbance of their hitherto enjoyed domestic peace was now removed. "Don't you think, my dear, that as it is now the month of May, the tennis season might be forthwith declared open?"

Amy Singleton at once caught at the idea for the sake of her sister, and as Bailey, the gardener, for some little time past had been preparing the ground, an hour or two afterwards found the old man, with the assistance of Tom and George Singleton, busily engaged in measuring the court and marking it out. This latter part of the ceremony Bailey was rather glad to be relieved of, for he was not a little nervous lest some mathematical inaccuracies on his part should cause the wrath of the young gentlemen to descend upon his head. This, however, gave Bailey the opportunity of holding forth upon another, and really a very important, branch of the subject, on which he felt more qualified to speak.

"Now, gentlemen," said Bailey, "the court is ready for use, and I ain't a-going to say nothing about that; but please remember, Mr. Tom," continued he, touching his cap, "that as you've only *one* court, you had better not fag it too much, especially at first or in doubtful weather: by that, I mean too soon after rain, for the new grass and turf is still young and tender, and if you cut it up much early in the season you will find yourselves playing for most part of the summer on the bare earth, which is very unsightly; and, besides, the balls will then very likely not play true, as well as get very dirty."

All the young players readily admitted the truth of this, but Bailey, nevertheless, felt the necessity for this piece of caution on his part, as he added: "I want the turf to get regularly set and well-grown before you use it very often."

The Haredales chancing to look in that day, almost immediately after luncheon, the opportunity was at once seized for the commencement of the tennis campaign, and, spite of herself, not to say much to the delight of her sister, Nelly Singleton's spirits rose to the occasion.

Meantime, in quite another part of the garden matters more properly horticultural were being discussed; for, as we all know, it was the great bedding-out month, and on these occasions Mr. Singleton always allowed Bailey the assistance of old Dobbin, the cottage gardener. So much wheeling between the greenhouse and the flower-beds, so much stooping and so much carrying of boxes of young plants, was not a little trying to some of the rheumatic joints of poor old Bailey, and for a few minutes—for this happened at regular and necessary intervals—Dobbin, finding himself alone with Mr. Singleton, ventured in a sort of timid undertone to remark:

"So you've lost the young gentleman, sir."

Mr. Singleton looked up with a start of surprise from the bed over which he was stooping, and for a moment said nothing, though confident to whom Dobbin was alluding.

"Begging your pardon, sir, for saying it," continued Dobbin, with a slight tremble in his voice; "but I b'aint sorry as he's gone, for he put me about a bit, he did, coming so often to my little garden, and I felt assured it worn't on *your* account that he come, sir."

"Well, never mind, Dobbin," said Mr. Singleton, wishing to crush the conversation almost from the outset of it. "Young Mr. Merriman has gone—for I know you must be alluding to him—so he will not put you about any more."

"Thank you, sir; yes, I knows it, and——"

"Bailey," Mr. Singleton broke in abruptly, "I want, before we do those beds in the front of the house, to have a little talk with you about them. Last year they looked a little too formal and heavy, and as the season advanced there were occasionally some quite ugly blanks."

"Well, sir, look here," said Bailey: "I'm pretty strong this year in hardy and half-hardy annuals sown in pots. Many of them are now well advanced under glass, so that you never need fear to have any blanks, and as soon as anything dies down I shall be able to replace it with something gay and just bursting into flower. Where there is any vacancy I could at once, for the matter of that, plunge in pot and all, as we have often done before."

"Very well," replied Mr. Singleton. "And now I should like this next pansy-bed—true, it is only a small one—to look gay also as long as possible, and be sure that if any bloom comes finer than the rest to mark it out for seed, and never, Bailey, let a bad

bloom remain on : pluck them off, indeed, one after the other, for we know that strength is thereby added to the rest of the plant and will keep it in better and in a more healthy flowering order. Then too, I think you had better plant out the struck cuttings of those other pansies to make successive beds, and take off, too, any short side-shoots that you want for other cuttings. I think they make better and stronger plants than the *tops* of long ones."

"Oh!" suddenly exclaimed Mr. Haredale, coming up to Mr. Singleton, "I should much like to hear or see something, sir, of those rose stocks that we got in one of our November rambles last year."

"By all means," replied Mr. Singleton. "Come this way with me ; it is fortunate that you asked me, for I was only a few minutes ago thinking of looking them over. Now see, Haredale," continued the animated old gentleman, as they walked presently up to the goodly row of stocks : "they are already throwing out some healthy shoots, but, ah!"—taking out his pruning-knife—"I must have *that* off." Suiting the action to the word, he at once cut off from three or four of the stocks some dead portions that were *at the top*, and remarked, "We must cut down to the top shoots, as all above have died ; indeed, as you will see, all the shoots which break out along the stock must either be cut or rubbed off, except just the two or—at the most—three at the top. And *these* it is to which we shall give all our attention, as it is on certainly two of them that, all being well, by the end of June or the beginning of July, we shall hope to bud : an interesting process, Haredale, of which, when the time comes, I shall be glad to show you more."

"'ONE FOR YOU, AND TWO FOR UNCLE!'" (*p.* 369).

"It is essential, then, it would seem, Mr. Singleton, to rub off *all* shoots that make their appearance, even though close to the ground?"

"Most certainly," was the reply. "And see here, too;" and taking up a trowel that lay close by, he at once half dug or half grubbed up some red-looking briar shoots that sprang from the soil a few inches

from the base of the stock, and which the root of the stock had lately thrown up; "by this means the whole strength of the stock is now thrown into our young and promising shoots at the top."

The shouts and laughter that came from the other end of the garden, where the tennis-court was, were now at their height, when the postman was seen walking towards the house down the drive. Nelly Singleton suddenly left the game, then momentarily at a standstill, and advanced to meet him, taking some letters from his hand almost at the same minute that her sister Amy came up behind her. Turning quickly round, Nelly exclaimed:

"One for you, and two for uncle!"

But her colour was heightened and her eyes unusually bright, and the next moment Amy, with a quick-beating heart, fancied that Nelly had quietly pocketed one letter.

THE YACHT IN THE BAY: A SEASIDE STORY.

BY EDITH E. CUTHELL.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

SANDYCOMBE, at present, does not aspire to the dignity of a watering-place. True that around the old fishing village—old, perhaps, as the days of the tin-trading Phœnicians or King Arthur himself—have grown up a few small houses inhabited by the class called "retired." But as yet, lodgings to let are practically unknown; the "Sloop" Inn is the village alehouse, and no more. No esplanade disfigures the rocky shore of the little bay, and German bands and niggers are not dreamt of. The reason for this is that Sandycombe lies a good twelve miles over the moor from the nearest railway. Neither do the artists patronise it. The bay is pretty enough, the colouring of the dark rugged cliffs, and the outline of the rocks below and the moorland hills above, attractive. But, on either hand, along the coast lie lovelier inlets, and the brethren of the brush pass Sandycombe by.

Inland, there are some gentlemen's seats, the larger inhabited during the shooting season only. But the smaller squires and the upper class of Sandycombe constitute a little society to themselves, and hold rather aloof from the world of Moorhampton, the neighbouring market-town; so it will be readily perceived that life in the little bay bounded by the "Lion's Head" is uneventful, not to say rather dull.

All the more delightful then to have something to talk about. And so the Miss Wookeys found it at Mrs. Partland's tea-party, which was one of those staid little entertainments much patronised by Sandycombe *élite*. It was Captain Chiverton, formerly—very formerly—of the P. & O. service, who, with the rector and the curate, constituted the male element in the small world, who brought the news. Had they seen the smart steam yacht which had brought up in the bay?

"Then it must be the owner we met as we came down the street," said Miss Wookey, senior.

"*Such* a handsome young man! so *beautifully* dressed in smart yachting clothes!" put in her sister, with a glance at Captain Chiverton, which was intended to kindle a flame of jealousy within him: for, after all these years of angling, Miss Selina had not yet given up all hopes of that ancient mariner.

Little Evie Milverton, the only young thing in the room except a kitten, opened her pretty eyes quite wide.

"A young man in Sandycombe! is such a thing possible?" she gasped, and was promptly suppressed by Mrs. Partland.

And then the conversation passed on into ancient reminiscences of other yachts which from time to time had occasionally come into the bay, which were profoundly uninteresting to Evie, who rose to take her departure as soon as opportunity offered.

"Well, my dear, when does Mr. Rowland return?" asked Mrs. Partland, as she shook hands.

For the life of her, Evie could not resist flushing up.

"For next Sunday, the rector says," she answered.

"We do miss him, and his voice too, on Sundays, don't we, my dear?" said Captain Chiverton. "Keeps me awake, which the rector don't——"

"Oh fie, Captain!" interposed Miss Wookey. Under cover of the gentle raillery which followed Evie escaped.

She was dying, of course, with all the curiosity of eighteen, to see this new yacht, and started off for a walk along the shore. The vessel lay in the usual anchorage, under the "Lion's Head," and Evie made her way round under the cliffs to that corner of the bay, to inspect it as closely as possible. She was followed by her constant companion, Nip, the fox terrier pup—a present from Philip Rowland, the curate.

The yacht was certainly a fine one, and looked a picture of perfect fitting out. Nearer the "Lion's Head," her dinghey, with two sailors and a gentleman in her, was being rowed about, as if they were fishing.

Evie watched the yacht, and Nip, the terrier, of a youthful and foolish disposition, watched and barked at a conger eel he had disturbed in a hole in the rock. Neither of the pair watched the incoming tide. When Evie became aware that, unless she beat a hurried retreat, her way back would be cut off,

nothing she could do would induce Nip to take the same view of the matter.

She whistled, called, implored, commanded; Nip declined to leave the conger eel, and Evie was loth to leave him to an untimely fate. The tide had nearly reached the cliffs, which it bathes at high water all round the bay, and Evie was making up her mind for a wade, if not indeed for a swim home, and was seizing the unwilling Nip in her arms, when she heard the sound of oars behind her.

Just in time, for Evie was up to her ankles in water already; the yacht's boat she had noticed pulled ashore, and Miss Wookey's "nandsome young man," in his "beautiful yachting clothes," sprang out, and offered to row her back.

Of course Evie accepted, with a delight mingled with a pleasant sense of doing something rather out of the common, and not unmixed with a lurking hope that Miss Wookey's big telescope in their verandah might at that moment be directed on to the bay.

Which was the case. Miss Selina, the sentimental, who took a great interest in the yacht, had her right eye glued to the glass, and suddenly called to her sister.

"Well I never, sister! there's the little boat rowed out from under the cliff, and a lady in it, and a dog, too! Looks like Nip; and that is Evie's hat—there's not one in Sandycombe like it! What *can* she be doing in the boat?"

"Probably caught by the tide, and been picked up," remarked the practical elder sister.

"How romantic! And they make such a handsome couple sitting together in the stern."

"Humph! Rather odd, *I* think it. They've not been introduced."

"How could they, sister? Who was there to do it? Oh dear! they are rowing up to the yacht."

"Very extraordinary," said the elder Miss Wookey, her curiosity bringing her out into the verandah. "Here, let me have a look, Selina. Yes, indeed, they've rowed her up to the yacht; and see, a steward is handing cups and something down the ladder into the boat! Whatever can Evie be thinking of?"

"How very attentive of him! Quite like the hero

"THE HERO OF THE HOUR WAS WALKING ON THE SANDS, AND BY HIS SIDE WAS EVIE MILVERTON" (*p.* 371).

in a novel," sighed Miss Selina. "Perhaps she got wet with the tide, and he fears she might catch cold."

"How the boat does bob about! It always is so jumpy out under the 'Lion's Head' when the tide's coming in. It would make me ill," sniffed Miss Wookey. "Ah, there! serve her right. Upset the tea-cup all over her dress—her best one, too, she put on for Mrs. Partland's tea-party! Serve her right! Oh my!" and Miss Wookey almost screamed, and removed her head from the telescope in a shocked manner.

Miss Selina hastened to look through.

"Tut! tut! tut! quite improper, sister! I'm quite ashamed to look! She's gone up the ladder, and is sitting on the deck in a big wicker-chair, and having another cup of tea! How shocking!"

"Selina, I do not think you had better look any more," interposed Miss Wookey, removing the telescope.

A little later, Evie Milverton, in a damaged frock, but brimming over with excitement, rushed into the little drawing-room at "The Honeysuckles," where her mother—a faded beauty, now a nervous invalid—lay perpetually on the sofa and read novels, and proceeded to pour forth her adventure.

"My darling! how romantic! Like a story, isn't it? And he's an officer, you say, and a major! How interesting!"

For Mrs. Milverton, though she was the widow of a country lawyer, never forgot the fact that her father had been a colonel in John Company's service, who had fought in the Sikh war, as was testified by sundry carved work-boxes and other trophies of Indian manufacture which ornamented the little apartment.

The next morning the household at "The Honeysuckles" was thrown into quite a flutter by the unexpected advent of the owner of the yacht himself. He had brought a parasol Miss Milverton had left on board, and hoped she was none the worse for her wetting.

Of course he was asked in, and Mrs. Milverton hurried into her best cap and shawl to receive him. He made quite a long call, admired the work-boxes and the view, and noticed grandpapa's sword over the mantel-piece. When he left Mrs. Milverton was in ecstasy.

"What a charming young man, my dear! *So* good-looking *I* call him, and such manners! Knew all about your poor grandpapa, he said. Give *me* officers, so superior in manner to curates!" she added, rather scornfully.

Evie blushed, and turned away somewhat uneasily.

"Some curates are *very* nice," she said, half to herself; "but—but—I've never met anyone quite like Major Mellasis before," she added.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

THE Reverend Philip Rowland had returned from his holiday. He sat in his rooms overlooking the main street of Sandycombe, and listened to his loquacious landlady, as she poured forth a torrent of information while laying the cloth for tea.

"We be main glad to have you back, sir, we be! There's Goody Blane a-lingerin' on like, can't go off easy, sez she, 'less she knows you're back to bury of her! And Mrs. Teague, she's her hands full with Teague again! He's been on the spree ever sin' that great haul o' mack'ril. I do 'ope as how you'll get him on the straight agin, sir! And then there's the Pullings' weakly twin. Miss S'lina Wookey she reck'mended some new-fangled food or other, and Mrs. Pullings, to be on the safe side, guv' it some o' what Mrs. Partland talks such a lot on, as well; but that child don't thrive nohow! And both the leddies has been too busy to see to their districks, sir, they sez. Oh, sir, such visitins' and parties, as you don't often see at Sandycombe! The new gentleman in the yacht, so open-handed and horsepitible-like, lunches on board and teas ashore. Patronises all the shops in the place. Quite a godsend, I calls him—begging your pardin, sir—in these bad times."

This was the first Philip Rowland heard of his rival, as he soon found him out to be; for he met Miss Wookey in the street.

"You find us quite in a whirl of excitement, Mr. Rowland. Such a charming visitor, and evidently as delighted with Sandycombe as we are with him!"

"Finds 'The Honeysuckles' a great attraction, I fancy," added her sister, with a simper, jerking her parasol in the direction of Mrs. Milverton's little cottage.

Next he saw him at a distance; and he was not alone. The hero of the hour was walking on the sands, and by his side was Evie Milverton. They walked close together, and slowly. The girl's eyes were bent on the sand, and his on her face, and he was talking earnestly. You know the attitude.

Philip Rowland looked down upon them from the cliff. He was on his way to wrestle morally with the tipsy Teague, and felt suddenly all manner of unchristian feelings rise in his heart against the dark-eyed stranger. But he hastened to stifle them. He was a good young man, was Rowland, zealous, conscientious, and with plenty of knack and tact with the poor people of the large and scattered parish in which he toiled. But he was but human, after all, and he was very much in love with Evie Milverton.

On his way home he met Captain Chiverton, who greeted him with a sailor's geniality.

"Glad to see you back again, my lad! We can ill spare ye. But you've come back to find all the women-folk running mad after that young swell of a major in the yacht. Never could abide horse-soldiers myself; and the airs the fellow gives himself—'Pon my word, can't make out what they see in him! Thought little Evie Milverton, at least, had more sense! Hope you've not been away too long, my boy," added the old sailor, shaking his head at him.

His words filled Philip Rowland's honest heart with much misgiving. He thought of them as he sat that night over his pipe (a luxury he allowed himself when his day's work was done), and recalled how he had

seen the two on the sands together. It did seem hard.

Quite unexpectedly, during his holiday a great stroke of luck had befallen him. When he went away, marriage with the girl he loved had seemed a hopeless dream. He cared too much for her to ask her to share a curate's pittance and his penurious life. But, suddenly, a change had come over that dream. Rowland had been offered a living—not a very good one, indeed, but it meant a position and means. He had come back full of hope and love, the future opening golden before him, to ask Evie Milverton to be his wife.

And now, between them, rose the figure of Major Mellasis, of the steam-yacht *Dalliance*, rich, fascinating, and—evidently—fascinated.

There is a nook just under the cliff called the "Lion's Head," approached by a walk over the moor amongst the gorse and the tamarisk, much resorted to by the "company-keeping" couples in Sandycombe, when Sundays, or rough weather at sea, or no fish being in, keep the male population on *terrâ firma*. It was occupied one evening by Mellasis and Evie Milverton.

The former had that day given, on the *Dalliance*, to all Sandycombe society a big lunch, provided, regardless of expense, from the principal hotel at Moorhampton. Captain Chiverton, overcoming, for the nonce, his aversion to his host, had condescended to be of the party, and had pronounced the whole thing excellent. Even Mrs. Milverton had risen from her sofa to be present.

"Things are getting so *very* serious, you know: his attentions are becoming *so* marked, that I really *couldn't* let the darling child go without me!" she had confided to Mrs. Partland.

Just as they were starting Mr. Rowland had called, looking grave, on some parish matter. He soon perceived his visit ill-timed. Evie was so taken up with the major, who had come ashore for them, that she would hardly look at him. Her mother playfully shook a finger at him.

"You naughty man! You've been back some days and never been near us! Here, Major Mellasis, do invite Mr. Rowland to come——"

The major put up his eye-glasses, and drawled out what was intended to be an invitation to join the party. But Evie, looking bewitching in a new summer hat, turned away and said never a word. Rowland muttered some incoherent excuse, and hurried off.

"Dear now!" wondered Mrs. Milverton with her usual tact, as the party passed through the little garden down to the quay. "How sulky Mr. Rowland's come back, to be sure!"

The major bent his head down to Evie, and said something no one else caught. But she shrugged her shoulders with a laugh, and got very red.

The lunch was a long and a merry one, for everyone meant to make the most of an entertainment such as was not given every day in Sandycombe. Then they all sat on deck, and the major sang songs to his banjo. Tea followed in the snug saloon, upholstered in the latest fashion by a great London shop.

"Lor!" remarked Miss Wookey, under her breath, as she stroked the plush frames of the mirrors; "it must have cost a mint of money!"

"And the walls hung with brocade! My goodness! but Evie's a lucky girl," added her sister, with a sentimental laugh.

For, though the major had taken her mother down to lunch, Evie had been pointedly placed on his other hand. And he was close by her side, attentive when afternoon tea was served on deck.

The girl's head was getting fairly turned. She was very excited all that day, rattling on and laughing much, with a heightened colour and a sparkling eye that became her well.

And then, when they reached the shore again, the major had asked her to show him the sunset from the nook on the "Lion's Head."

The sun sank slowly behind the black line of Carleon Point. The sea grew dark in the shadow of the cliffs, and a long summer afterglow flooded the summer sky. Still the two sat there.

The girl was very quiet now, filled with a kind of trembling awe, her eyes bent low; she answered in faltering monosyllables, she hardly knew how.

The man, on the contrary, seemed very much at his ease. He spoke with a fluency and a happy choice of words, which almost implied a previous acquaintance with a similar position.

"And you will let me get a ring—a diamond ring—for that dear little white finger?" gaining an unresisted possession of the whole hand—"the best Moorhampton can produce, for my own little darling!"

"Oh, Major Mel——"

"Arthur; you must call me Arthur, my Evie. Say it—'Arthur.'"

The girl looked up at him, all her mirth fled, a wistful look in her dewy eyes.

"Oh, is it really true? and you *do* love me, Arthur?"

His arm stole round her waist, and a seagull circling above the rocks, laughed as he answered:

"My darling, can you ask?"

She gently disengaged herself and rose.

"It's getting quite dusk. The light's lit on Carleon Point. We must go home."

"Not before you tell me: am I to get a ring? and shall it be diamonds? You'd like to have some diamonds, wouldn't you, now?"

She turned her head back to him as they made their way up the cliff.

"Diamonds? oh, I've got lots!"

A look of intense surprise, which escaped her in the dusk, passed over the major's face.

"Lots?" he repeated.

"Yes, family diamonds—grandpapa's, loot from the taking of the Punkahpore Palace in the war in India. They are mamma's and mine."

"What a little heiress!" replied Mellasis, looking down upon her with an odd patronising smile, adding,

"Do show them me. I'm a judge of diamonds. You shall put them on; you'll look like a queen in them, I know."

"Perhaps I will, if you like to come up to-morrow to tea."

"If I *like*, etc., etc., etc.," all along the moorland path, till they reached the village.

The boat from the *Dalliance* was waiting as usual at the quay, and after it had embarked its owner, Evie, her heart a prey to conflicting emotions she could barely describe, watched it shoot away into the darkness. Then she turned to go home.

But a figure stepped out of the shadow of a curing-shed, and confronted her. Philip Rowland had also watched the major depart.

"Miss Milverton," he began, stepping by her side up the steep cobbly street, "I want just a word with you. I *must* say good-bye to you before I go."

His voice sounded harsh and strained, and as Evie glanced up with surprise, she saw on his face an odd, set, hard look she had never seen before. Philip Rowland looked ten years older.

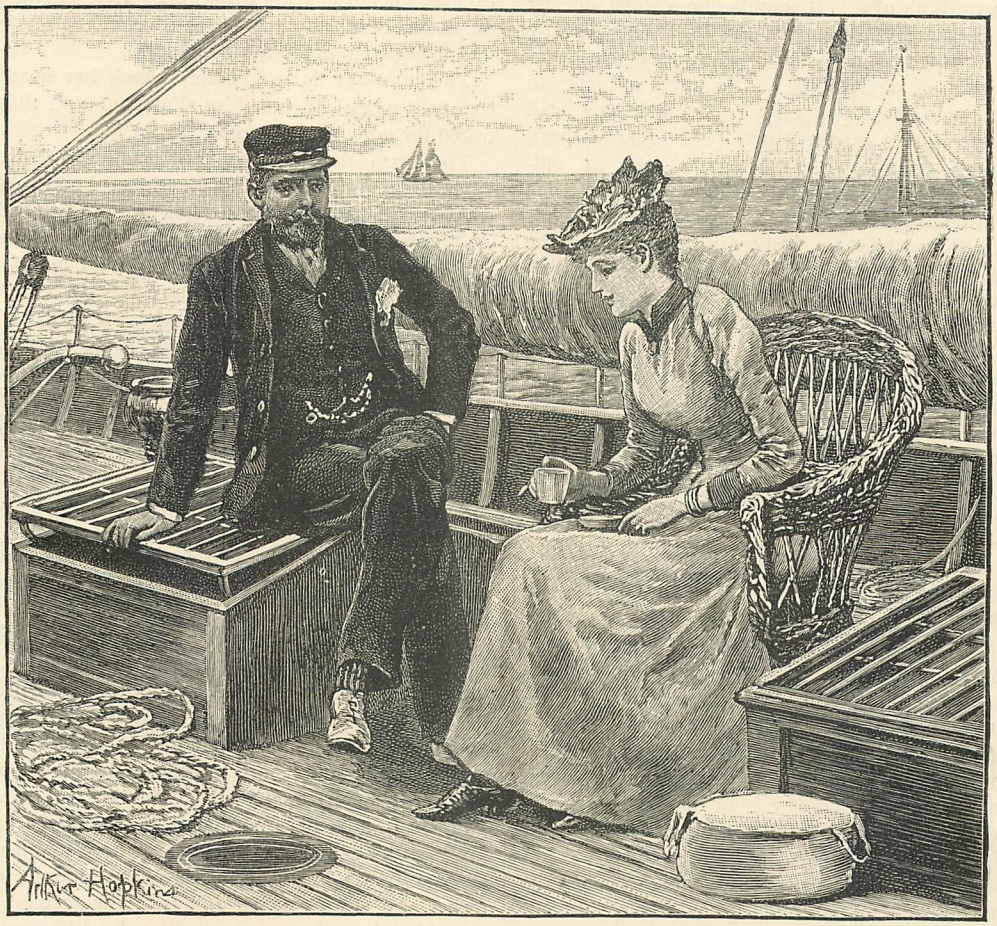
"Good-bye?" faltered the girl.

"Yes, good-bye," he replied, striding so fast up the street that she could hardly keep pace with him. "I'm going away."

"This is very sudden, Mr. Rowland"—she felt she *must* say something. "You've only been back a few days."

"Yes, it is *very* sudden—not what I had thought of, planned, hoped—Miss Milverton. But that's all up," he continued, almost fiercely. "I'm only a poor parson; my lot is to work, to suffer! You were never made for *that*, Miss Milverton," he went on. "You're too beautiful! So I must say good-bye. I hope you'll be very happy," he added—"that he'll be good to you—that—that—— Good-bye!"

And he strode away into the darkness, leaving her standing bewildered in the street.



"HE WAS CLOSE BY HER SIDE" (*p.* 372).

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

THE next evening, after tea, the Miss Wookeys from their verandah, Captain Chiverton from his flag-staff,

and Mrs. Partland from her bay-window, all eagerly watched Major Mellasis leave the quay and be rowed across to his yacht. Then, with one accord, impelled by a common irresistible impulse of curiosity, they all converged upon "The Honeysuckles." Here they found Mrs. Milverton in a state of hysterical joy, murmuring, as one after another, even including Captain Chiverton in a quasi-paternal manner, they gave Evie their blessings and embraces.

"Only to think of it! It sounds like a story, doesn't it?—the dear child! However can I part with her, my treasure! But such a match! Fancy, he has thousands a year—a lovely place in Scotland, a house in town, and such grand ideas, too! It makes my head swim. He quite scorned my poor dear father's Punkahpore diamonds: says they're such an old-fashioned setting. He's taken them to send to his jeweller to have them re-mounted, like his cousin's Lady De Montchair's. (Only fancy, my Evie the cousin of a Countess!) And they're to be set with sapphires—sapphires are all the fashion now, he says, and he thinks they'll suit Evie's complexion. He *does* admire her so!"

"Humph!" grunted Captain Chiverton, in his most "ancient sea-dog" manner. "Sapphires, countesses, and what not! Not my style at all—not the sort I'd have chosen for ye, child!"

And Mrs. Milverton sighed, and murmured something about "uncouthness." But Miss Wookey broke in with a sudden burst.

"By the by, have you heard the news about Mr. Rowland? He's going away."

"Going away?" cried everyone at once.

"I had it from the rector himself," nodded Miss Wookey importantly. "He's going to be a missionary or something in Sierra Leone, or somewhere."

"More fool he!" grunted the old captain.

He certainly was in a bad humour that evening.

"Shockingly bad climate—Sierra Leone. Boy won't live a month!"

With which cheerful prophecy he bade the party good-night, and took himself off.

The next morning, when Sandycombe opened its shutters and drew up its blinds, it could hardly believe its eyes.

The *Dalliance* was gone.

The bay seemed quite empty without her, so used had they become to the sight of her shapely white hull and graceful spars.

Everyone was intensely surprised, for had not Mrs. Milverton invited everybody to tea to meet her son-in-law-elect that very day?

"Perhaps she's run round to Plymouth for shelter; and yet the weather's fair enough," suggested Captain Chiverton.

"Perhaps the major has gone to stay at 'The Honeysuckles,' and has sent away the yacht," surmised Mrs. Partland.

But Mrs. Milverton was as completely surprised at the disappearance of the *Dalliance* as anyone else.

"He might have left a message or sent a line. I shall scold him when he returns," pouted Evie.

"He's gone himself about the jewellery, of course," said her mother. "With his swell ideas, of course he must see to it himself. Such handsome presents as he has offered!"

But not that day, or the next, did the white prow of the *Dalliance* steam round the corner of the bay, and cast anchor under the "Lion's Head."

Three, four, days passed. People got tired of asking of news of the major, and Mrs. Milverton of inventing excuses for not hearing from him. Evie began to put on an ostentatiously gay air, to cover vague misgivings which began to creep in upon her.

The fifth day Miss Wookey shook her head mysteriously when she met Mrs. Partland, and that lady asked for news of the missing yacht.

The sixth day Captain Chiverton growled aloud when the major's name was mentioned by Miss Selina.

A week passed since the departure of the *Dalliance*. At "The Honeysuckles," Mrs. Milverton was invisible with a sick headache, and Evie had shut herself up in her room, and declined to see anybody.

When Mrs. Partland, who had been up to inquire, met Miss Wookey going on the same errand, they both shook their heads at each other, and murmured: "Poor dear things!"

And, in the midst of this week of tension, Philip Rowland had quietly slipped away, almost unmissed, save by the sick and sad and the miserable folk in Sandycombe. But society hardly noticed his departure till Sunday came round, when, instead of Rowland's harmonious tones, it had to put up with the old rector's sing-song reading, at sixes and sevens with the choir.

Monday morning brought a visitor to "The Sloop," a scrupulously-dressed, clean-shaven man, who drove over in a fly from Moorhampton, and took up his quarters at the village hostelry. He prowled about the place, apparently aimlessly, talking to any and everyone, and asking a great many questions. Of course he heard all about Major Mellasis and the *Dalliance*, and became much interested in it, and professed to be eagerly watching for her re-appearance. Especially was he interested in descriptions of her owner and stories of his doings. The account of the grand luncheon party appeared to afford him considerable amusement. He was certainly an odd man, this visitor.

The second day of his stay he found out Captain Chiverton, doing, as was his wont, a little quarter-deck exercise on his flag-staff terrace after breakfast. He soon got him on to the subject of Mellasis, for no one in Sandycombe could talk of anything else.

"But perhaps you're a friend of his, sir?" suddenly exclaimed the old sailor, pulling himself up short in the midst of some very strong expression of opinion on the subject of their conversation.

"Well, not exactly a friend," replied the stranger, with an odd twinkle in his cold grey eye. "But I've been acquainted with him, I may say, for some time, and I'm particularly anxious to meet him again now; and so are others."

"Do you mean to say that there's something fishy

about the fellow?" interrogated the captain, stopping short in his tramp, and fixing the other fiercely. "Because I never liked him; and if he's been playing fast and loose with our little Evie, I'll see him——"

"Precisely, my dear sir," said the other. "Fact is, I'm down here on a job from Scotland Yard. I 'want' your 'Major Mellasis,' as you call him."

Captain Chiverton relieved his stupefaction by an outburst of feeling such as would have shocked Miss Selina, and then he turned to the detective, and pointed to his little parlour.

"Come in and tell me all about it," he said.

"It's a long story, ye know," began the detective, "but I'll put it short. Your 'Major' (William Curtis is his real name) was a sergeant in a dragoon regiment. Spent some of his troop money, and had to bolt—deserted, in fact. Since then we've come across him once or twice, and not always to his advantage. He's a taking sort of chap with the females, and, through living with h'orficers, he's got a sort of gentleman-like way with him, and has the gift of the gab, too. Altogether, he's an out-and-out smart one, and a mighty slippery fish to land. I'm not sure we've done it yet."

"And what do you 'want' him for this time?" anxiously asked Captain Chiverton.

"Oh! his last job afore this one—too long to tell you; but now I've lit on this new business, which will make it hotter for him when we catch him. Fancy the impudence of the fellow! Lying snug here all the while in that yacht, in a little hole like this! And then to bolt in her!"

"And where's he gone to?"

"He steamed away from here to the coast of Spain. They've wired he left the yacht at Bilbao, not a farthing of the crew's wages paid. They may whistle for their money, poor wretches, and so may the owner he hired the yacht from, and the tradespeople. He seems to have lived like a lord here!"

"By George, and so he did!" exclaimed Captain Chiverton, remembering the champagne.

"But we *must* run him down soon," went on the other. "He's got no cash with him, and no means of raising any, that we know of."

"But he has, though," put in the old sailor, excitedly springing up. And he told of Mrs. Milverton's diamonds.

The detective's face grew disappointed.

"He *is* a smart one, he is! It's a pleasure to be after him, it is! He always was one that could twist the women round his little finger. Captain, I must ask you to take me to see these ladies about this fresh business of the jewels."

Mrs. Milverton was confronted with the detective. When his story was thoroughly made clear to her, she went into a bad fit of hysterics, and no further information could be got out of her. The detective took his departure next day, promising to send word if any news were heard of the absconding one.

But the "major," with the cunning and agility of a fox, had once again eluded the arm of the law. The tradespeople might sigh in vain for the goods supplied him; and Mrs. Milverton wept for the loss of her father, the colonel's, diamonds. She never saw them again.

It was a fearful shock this to Sandycombe society, and stirred it to the core. It gave it more to talk about than it had ever had before. And it *did* talk!

Poor Evie! The sympathy of everybody was unendurable. She grew pale and ill-looking, and lost all her spirits. Mrs. Milverton was thoroughly unnerved by this most mortifying business, and, as is the case with weak natures, became more garrulous and irritable the more she suffered. But her daughter bore it all patiently. The girl's character was deepening and strengthening in trouble. She was coming out well in it. But there were dark rings round her eyes and a want of mirth in her laugh that made kind old Captain Chiverton's heart ache as he watched her.

The glory of the summer had faded just as the *Dalliance* vanished from under the "Lion's Head." Autumn came on apace that year, and very soon the equinoctial gales were whipping white horses across the bay and howling over the moorland. And Evie drooped more and more.

So one day Captain Chiverton wrote a letter, and when he got the answer, he told his old housekeeper to prepare the spare room in his little cottage for a guest, who came as the October afternoon was closing in. Evie had wandered out to the nook above the "Lion's Head"—the only place in Sandycombe where she felt free from prying eyes and wagging tongues. She sat looking mournfully out to sea, at the mist gradually closing in and shutting out the horizon, at the "creeping tide" crawling sluggishly up to the rocks, while the harsh cry of the seagulls rang in her ears like a mocking demoniac laughter. The world seemed very sad, and dull, and hopeless.

Suddenly a step came down the cliff path behind her. It paused a moment, as the new-comer gazed at the sad, crushed-looking little figure sitting alone on the bench.

Then a voice said in her ear, "Evie!"

She sprang up, and stood before him; the tears which were standing in her eyes welled over, and she covered her face with her hands, and began to cry.

"Oh, Philip," she said, "can you ever forgive me?"

For all answer he clasped her in his arms.

And a little breeze sprang up from round the "Lion's Head," and chased away a corner of the mist, and showed the evening star rising calm and bright in the twilight sky.

* * * * * *

There was a great wedding in Sandycombe. High and low, rich and poor, all flocked up to the windy church on the cliff, and Captain Chiverton gave away the bride.

"They've plenty of love to season their dinner of herbs. They can do without the diamonds!" sighed Miss Selina, as she wept sentimentally during the ceremony.

Our Lady Prize-Winners in Story Competitions.

MISS FAY AXTENS,
AUTHOR OF "THROUGH DEVIOUS WAYS," &c.
Photo: W. H. Midwinter & Co., Bristol.

"MARY HAMPDEN,"
AUTHOR OF "THE HEIRESS OF ABERSTONE," &c.
Photo: Window & Grove, Baker Street, W.

(MRS.) C. E. C. WEIGALL,
AUTHOR OF "THE TEMPTATION OF DULCE CARRUTHERS," &c.
Photo: B. Duckmanton, Gainsborough.

MISS EDITH LISTER,
AUTHOR OF "ON STRONGER WINGS," &c.
Photo: Debenham, Southsea.

MISS ANNIE E. WICKHAM,
AUTHOR OF "FORMED FOR CONQUEST," &c.
Photo: W. H. Puddicombe, Bideford.

MISS KATE EYRE,
AUTHOR OF "A STEP IN THE DARK," &c.
Photo: Walery, Regent Street, W.

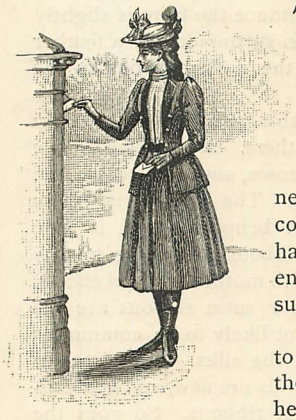
(MRS.) EDITH E. CUTHELL,
AUTHOR OF "THE YACHT IN THE BAY," &c.
Photo: Hughes & Mullins, Ryde, I.W.

MISS LAMBERT SHEILDS,
AUTHOR OF "NOT ALL IN VAIN," &c.
Photo: Lafayette, Dublin.

CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.—WHAT TO WEAR IN MAY.

FROM OUR LONDON AND PARIS CORRESPONDENTS.

I.—FROM OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENT.



THERE must have been a great change in the seasons since those merry days when May was all warmth and all sunshine, when fires were discarded, and muslin dresses donned. But still as this month comes round we all begin to have a hope of spring and we endeavour to prepare for the summer days that are coming.

Our children are certain to occupy some of our thoughts. In the figure at the head of my chapter I have put before you a make of frock that should be useful for our school-girl daughters. It can be made in any sort of soft woollen, and is so simple that there would be no difficulty at all in producing it at home. You will see that the skirt is full and plain, sewn on to the bodice so that the costume can be slipped on at once. There is a narrow belt of the material at the waist simply finished off with a bow, in the middle of the back, which is cut, as far as the bodice is concerned, in one piece, without any seam, except beneath the arms. The sleeves are high on the shoulders and somewhat broad, being of a modified leg-o'-mutton cut, tapering at the wrist. In front a full blouse of blue silk is introduced, and care must be taken that the tint assimilates well with the dress. The band round the neck is somewhat high and is composed of six folds of the silk cut on the cross.

For wearing out of doors there is a long-basqued jacket, quite plain at the back, opening in front with velvet revers, sufficiently wide to show the full silk blouse. The velvet revers end on the bust, and four large-sized buttons are placed on either side of the jacket to the waist, where the two sides are united by a band of velvet. This is suited to warm spring days, but would not stand the ravages of a cold wind, when a fur tippet would be necessary.

The exact style of making dresses which is likely to be the fashion this coming summer time has been a moot question. The truth is there are almost as many modes as leading dressmakers, but I have selected two useful gowns which I think my readers might be quite safe in copying, if they want their dresses to last on well towards the end of the year.

Figures are so cultivated now that the dressmakers take every opportunity of showing the waist and shoulders as much as possible. We are much dependent upon stays which are made long-waisted and come up well in front; indeed, a new make of stay has a distinct pointed piece brought up over each breast, and shoulder straps are coming in again. All this tends to produce the appearance of great length of waist. The open jackets worn alike for indoors and outdoors are not likely to be superseded entirely, but they are better suited for wearing in the country with changeable waistcoats and shirts. For town wear the long all-round basque has a close-fitting bodice without any seam at the waist, but cut in one with the basque, as you see in the sketch.

This particular jacket is edged with a silk *bouillonné* and so are the cuffs—a new style which is likely to be a great deal worn in many ways and on many dresses. In the jacket in question it is supplemented by a charming arrangement of lace carried down both fronts from the throat, and forming a long deep lace jabot. The jabots of to-day differ from those of the past years in being much wider, fuller and more important. This is supplemented by a full cascade of lace edging each side. The material of which the dress is composed is a soft grounded woollen with sprays of flowers and silk brocade. The skirt is made long, but is not difficult to hold up as it has no foundation, and the train is light. An invisible loop in the back seam, only large enough for the finger to slip through, carefully placed so that it is raised the right length, makes the dress easy to wear out of doors. It is trimmed round the hem with a wide band of velvet to match, having *bouillonnés* of the silk at either edge. This may be replaced by feather trimming or a silk bordering like feathers, though this would not be so durable.

The small bonnet which accompanies it is a good indication of what is likely to be worn, generally, throughout the summer. You will see that it is little more than a plateau, bent to shape, with a bunch of ribbon bows intermixed with osprey, immediately above the forehead, and the same at the back. The strings are tied beneath the chin, and have short ends. An attempt was made to introduce bonnet strings which reach to the hem of the skirt, but the public would not have them, nor will they, I am inclined to think, adopt the coal-scuttle form of bonnet, which is of gigantic proportions, stands well up above the face, and is the excuse for introducing almost any amount of ostrich plumes placed erect. It is this kind of bonnet which we so often come across in the original sketches illustrating Dickens's works, but I think they do not commend themselves on the score of being becoming. But you may take it as a rule when the skirts become close and sheath-like, as there has been a tendency to make them of late, with a lack of drapery, an attempt is always made to enlarge the head-gear.

The other dress in the illustration is a modified Princess made in new colourings, or rather a mixture of colourings—a pinky fawn and over it a pinky brown, something between deep Rose du Barri and mahogany. This costume gives the idea of one dress

over another. The under-gown would appear to be a Princess of fawn cloth embroidered in a Renaissance scroll at the hem above a soft silk pinked-out ruche, which is now much in fashion. The large ruche has gone out, replaced by one, or sometimes two narrower ones, made as soft and mossy as they well can be. The over-dress, you note, is cut in sections, and edged with black cord, giving plenty of space for the under-dress to be seen. On the hips are large square fawn pockets, secured by four large buttons. The bodice opens in front showing the under-dress, and is secured at the waist by two bands, one fastening with a buckle to the right; the other with a buckle to the left. There are large wide revers of fawn colour at the neck matching the under-bodice, which is visible, and the straight collar band is supplemented by a black silk ruche coming well under the chin. The sleeves are of the darker tone, exceedingly broad at the top and narrow at the wrists, where they are embroidered with a pretty scroll ascending the arm, worked in black silk; and the same style of trimming outlines the front of the bodice of the over-dress, from below the revers to the waist.

In dressmaking care must be taken to produce if possible the effect of great breadth across the shoulders, which tends to diminish the size of the waist, and I think the model I have been describing indicates this leading feature. The hat is a new form of sailor, likely to be very popular both for the ordinary river wear in the summer time and for more dressy occasions. Its speciality is that the crown is low and the brim turns upwards. In the present instance the brim is slightly indented at the back, and is surrounded by a feather ruche with a tuft of bows of the darker colour in the dress placed on one side.

Some of the most fashionable hats are exceedingly large and bedizened with feathers. Many have double crowns, viz., a flat plateau crown, superpoised on the actual crown of the hat. The effect is more curious than charming, but being novel it is sure to find adherents. Moire ribbons are being greatly used, some plain and some with mother-of-pearl effects, others brocaded. Reversible satin ribbons are the fashion too, and a novelty not likely to be common is straw flowers, introduced on the silks. Hair lines in several colours on solid grounds are new, and you cannot do wrong in having shot ribbons. So goes the wheel of Fashion.

PERSUASION.

II.—FROM OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.

PARIS, with all its ups and downs of fortune, still continues to exercise a most potent influence on the Fashions of the world. I think you will agree with me that the figures illustrated in our third picture indicate pretty modes which the women of England would do well to follow, especially as they have the merit of simplicity.

The figure in the hat wears a woollen gown of a green hue, with curious flecks like lightning in blue and brown. The skirt is perfectly plain, save that the hem has a double row of stitching above a hem of silk of the same shade. Perhaps I should describe it more correctly as a binding of silk some three inches wide, a style which is being introduced largely on most of the spring dresses. Silk is also used for the lower portion of the sleeve and for the corselet bodice, which is of a pretty shape, having acute points at either edge in the centre of the front and back. It is made with great care, and is as scrupulously fitted as the bodice itself. The fancy material appears as a yoke at the neck, and over this is a full low bodice of plain material drawn in on a double cord with a wide pleated heading. The sleeves to the elbow are the same plain green stuff, and so is the frill which falls over the elbow on to the silk gauntlet, and a full gathered *bouillonné* appears at the wrist. From under the silk corselet comes a full pleated waist frill of the plain green fabric, and a pleating is also introduced beneath the chin, heading the straight collar band—a style borrowed from the Medici period. The hat is of velvet with a straight all-round brim and flat crown, and has a large aigrette of ostrich feathers in the centre of the front with a couple of tufts emerging from the top, known in Paris as the "Prince of

Wales plume." These tightly covered hats are in great favour with Parisians, but the material they most affect is satin, and many pink satin hats, softened by frillings of black lace, are worn by the most elegant women of our day. In the other figure, there is an illustration of the fashionable cloak. It is made of electric blue cloth with a triple cape. These capes, which are really full frillings, are quite the mode. It is three-quarter length and lined throughout with silk. It has a high collar and wide revers made of velvet, worked in gold.

The dress is quite simple. It is of soft pink silk with perpendicular lines of black, mere lines, not stripes. It is made as a short jacket bodice ending at the waist, and opens over a full under-bodice of guipure, with a black velvet collar band and Swiss belt. The bonnet is made in fancy straw, much larger than you have hitherto worn in England, the brim coming well over the forehead. It is trimmed with silk to match the dress, formed into high bows in front.

To be successful nowadays, a French milliner must make her bows as stiff and erect as quills "upon the fretful porcupine." Millinery is an art, rather than a business, so subtle are the combinations of colour, and so beautiful the blending of tints in all the materials to hand. The tide of Fashion is certainly setting in the direction of fancy straws, which now are taking the form of curious plaits in oriental tints: soft, but requiring the eye to be accustomed to them. Parisian colours are subdued but daring in their combinations, and it is possible now to buy a bonnet with so many tints in it that it is calculated to suit any style of colouring which prevails in the toilet.

PRIVATE VIEW DAY.

Those curious crowns which have so many names, Boulevard, Charbonnier, etc., closely resembling the top of a chimney-pot, appear on many of the wider brimmed bonnets, and are placed rather at the back than the usual position of a bonnet crown. Heliotrope and scarlet are mingled together in Paris now, and scarlet straw bonnets trimmed with ribbon to match are edged with violets. There is a revival of the beautiful colour we used to call "cerise," but which is now known as "toreador." It has an exquisite bloom upon it.

Ribbons are greatly in demand, and feather boas, so useful in the spring, are tied with moire ribbon, having ends long enough to reach to the feet, thus replacing the fur boas.

Home dressmakers in England who attempt to reproduce French fashions must be careful how they copy the present style of skirt. Nothing is more ungraceful than the plain skirts, fitted as they are to the upper portion of the body, unless the cut is perfect. The outlines of the figure are unduly displayed and all the weaknesses revealed. Moreover, the cross cut seams at the back are apt to be most untidy-looking unless the train is well supported. The best petticoats for wearing with the present style of dress are moreen, which, having a certain firmness and stiffness, keeps them out. Skirts should also be lined either with silk or with some firm woollen cloth like alpaca, which does not give. The most careful tacking is necessary in order that the two (the outside and the inside) should go well together. It is not a difficult matter to hold the train up, and if well arranged, a button in the centre of the waistband at the back and an invisible loop on the skirt will effect the purpose.

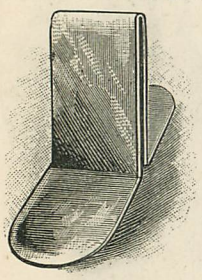
Fine cloth is the favourite material for spring mantles. One pretty shape gives a jacket at the back with square pockets, the sleeve-piece formed with triple capes, long ends falling in front. This is what is called the "Visite." Three-quarter length is the fashion. Transparent black guipure plays an important part, and many jet trimmings. Russian and other coarse makes have the preference over finer laces. The spring mantles are decidedly novel in most points.

THE GATHERER:

AN ILLUSTRATED RECORD OF INVENTION, DISCOVERY, LITERATURE, AND SCIENCE.

Correspondents are requested, when applying to the Editor for the names and addresses of the persons from whom further particulars respecting the articles in the GATHERER may be obtained, to forward a stamped and addressed envelope for reply, and in the case of inventors submitting specimens for notice, to prepay the carriage. The Editor cannot in any case guarantee absolute certainty of information, nor can he pledge himself to notice every article or work submitted.

A Simple Book-Holder.



The book-holder which we illustrate has been devised by one of the officials of the St. Martin's Free Public Library, Trafalgar Square. It is made of wire or sheet iron and bent in the manner shown, forming a vertical wall in the middle with a flap at either side. These flaps enable the holder to stand fast. The holders are simple, strong, and cheap, and specially intended for public libraries.

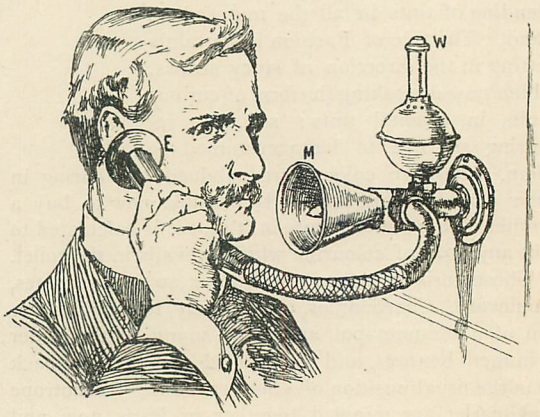
Green Carnations.

The green carnations which are now to be seen in the flower-shops of Paris and London are dyed by putting the stems of white carnations in an aqueous solution of the aniline dye called malachite green. To facilitate the capillary suction of the dye, the stem is slit here and there with a knife. At the end of twelve hours the petals are tinged with green, and a longer immersion deepens the tint. Lilac, narcissus, lilies, and other white flowers, can be tinted in the same way, and different colours may be given by means of different dyes. Eosin, for instance, yields a pretty red, and malachite green turns violet anemones to blue. The process was discovered accidentally by a Parisian florist, and the results are certainly pleasing to the eye; but there is something essentially false in this artificial coloration which cannot be commended.

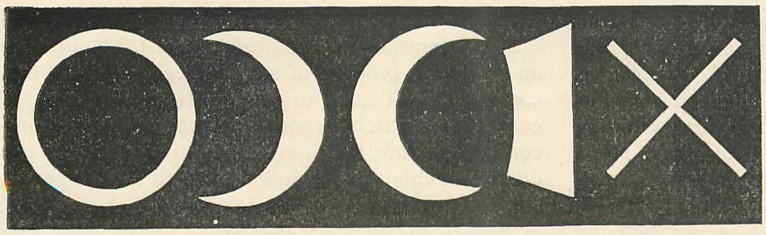
The Ships of Columbus.

A model of the ship *Santa Maria*, in which Columbus discovered the New World, is being made and will be exhibited, fully manned by Spanish sailors in the fifteenth century costume, at the great Columbian World's Fair next year. The *Santa Maria* was 90 feet in keel decked over all, and with a raised poop 26 feet long. She carried four masts, two square rigged and two with lateen sails. Her consorts, the *Pinta* and *Nina*, were undecked caravels of low draught for going close in shore or into estuaries. Brugada's picture in the Naval Museum of Madrid represents these craft on their arrival at San Salvador or Watling Island (Bahamas), the first land seen in the West Indies, with more or less fidelity. The *Santa Maria* had 50 sailors, the *Pinta* 30, and the *Nina* 24; the entire expedition consisting of 120 souls. It left the seaport of Palos in Andalusia, on the morning of August 3rd, 1492. Three days later the *Pinta* lost her rudder and put into Teneriffe for repairs. The vessels sailed again on September 6th, and seven days afterwards the variation of the magnetic compass was observed. On the 16th, the ships entered the Sargasso sea of floating weed (*fucus natans*) and two days later birds were seen, but no land appeared; and discontent born of fear broke out amidst the crews. On the 25th, there was a false alarm of land; and on October 7th, as well as 11th, the *Pinta* fished up a cane, a log of wood, and a stick curiously wrought with iron. At 10 p.m. the same night, Columbus is said to have pointed out a light ahead. Next day (Oct. 11th) at 2 o'clock in the morning Rodrigo de Triana, a sailor of the *Nina*, announced the appearance of land; and a few hours later Columbus set foot on shore, dressed in rich robes, and accompanied by the royal banner of Spain, with which he took possession of the new country in the name of their Catholic majesties of Castille and Leon.

A New Speaking-Tube.



The "homacoustic" speaking-tube which we illustrate has several advantages over the ordinary ones. For instance, there is no need to blow into the tube to sound the whistle, W, and one can speak or listen without any change of position, owing to the employment of a flexible ear-piece, E, as well as a fixed mouth-piece, M, after the manner of the telephone. Moreover, it enables the user to speak to any room of a house without the multiplication of mouth-pieces and whistles required by the old-fashioned system. A switch, working automatically, puts the instrument in communication with any of the other tubes throughout the building.



A COURSE INDICATOR.—FIG. 2.

A Course Indicator.

The crescent course indicator which we illustrate is a peculiar form of lamp which indicates the course of a ship with respect to another by certain luminous figures, and is designed to prevent collisions at sea. The indicator is shown in Fig. 1, and consists of a bucket-shaped case with an opaque bottom and cover and glass sides, through which the lamp inside is visible. It is placed in a line with the keel of the vessel, and may conveniently be hung on the forestay. When the vessel carrying it is seen end on, the difference in diameter between the dark bottom and cover of the indicator produces a luminous circle as shown in Fig. 2, and when the vessel is seen to port or starboard the two discs form crescents of light as shown next, the horns of the crescent always pointing in the direction the ship is moving. The fourth figure shows that the vessel is abeam and is simply the glass side of the indicator; and the last is a luminous cross-cut in the cover of the indicator, and is only seen when the ship is going astern. A little practice enables the navigator to judge of intermediate courses by the appearance of the figures, and even to estimate the distance of the vessel.

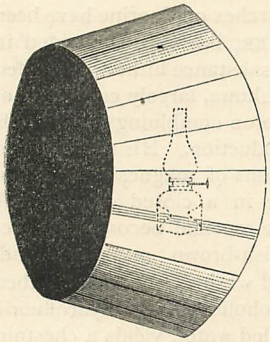


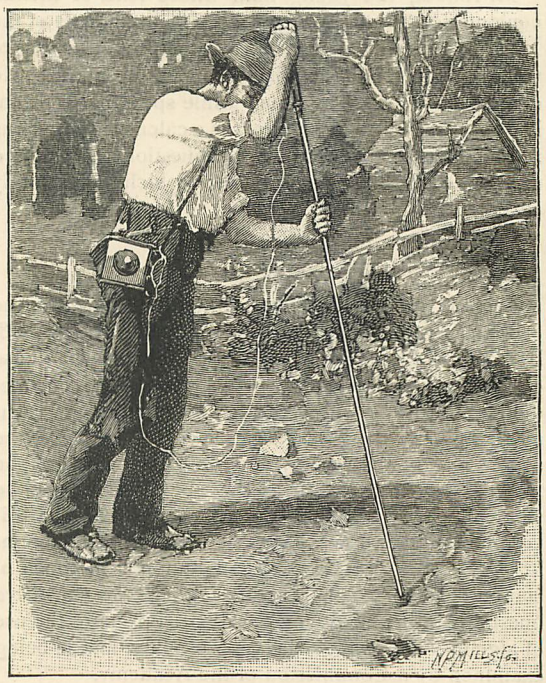
FIG. 1.

Some Novelties for House and Garden.

In the buildings that are being erected for the Guinness Trust Commissioners a simple but effective sash fastener, invented by Mr. J. A. Piccaver, is being used, and has much to commend it. To the inner sash of the window-frame is screwed a link-plate of brass, which carries a strong link (as of a chain) secured by a powerful staple. To the outer sash of the window-frame is screwed a corresponding plate which must be so fixed that the link on the other plate will just fall over a thumb-bit that is mounted on the plate for the outer sash. This thumb-bit is in section shaped something like a man's thumb, and, when first adjusted, the straight edge (corresponding to the nail-side) is further from the inner sash while the curved edge is inside the link. The pin by which the thumb-bit is pivoted to the plate passes through its oval neck slightly nearer to the straight edge than to the curved one, so that by the turning of the thumb-bit not only is the curved edge brought outside the link (which is thus fixed) but the sashes are drawn closely together.—That broom-handles, the knobs of table-drawers and cupboard doors, hat-pegs, and other household fixtures have a bad habit of coming unfixed is an unfortunate fact which no housewife would dispute. A new "grip" to prevent this has just been patented, and is worth consideration at the hands of all sufferers by such accidents. The grip is a metal plate which is to be nailed or screwed over the hole for the handle, knob, or peg, which has simply to be inserted at the opening in the plate and turned to the right two or three times. This turning brings into action a projecting point on the inner rim of the plate which practically cuts a screw-thread in the bottom of the handle, or whatever is being inserted. Of course if the grip is used on a broom or brush it may be transferred to a new one when the brush-head is worn out.—Garden shreds, ready cut for the nailing up of plants and creepers, and medicated to ward off insects such as are fond of depositing their eggs on the slips ordinarily used, are now to be procured. They are made in every size likely to be required and in suitable colours.

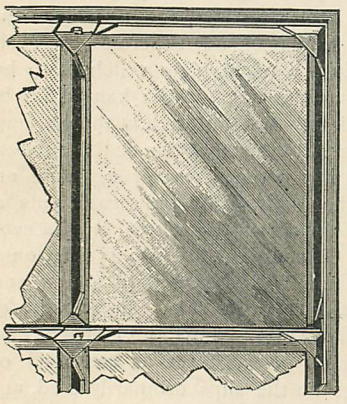
A Gold-Finder.

Alluvial gold diggings, that is to say, those in which the gold is found in detached lumps or nuggets under the soil, are most remunerative to the individual prospector who has not the wherewithal to embark in



quartz-crushing. To enable the prospector to discover gold at a depth below the surface the electric probe which we illustrate has been introduced. It consists of a steel boring tube having inside a metal rod connected to a battery and electric bell carried by the prospector. Should the point of the probe strike against a piece of gold the electric circuit is established and the bell rings. A sample of the soil thus found to be auriferous can be obtained by advancing the outer tube into the ground beyond the inner core.

A Steel Window Frame.



Our engraving represents part of a new window frame of pressed steel which has been introduced by a Birmingham firm. The glass is held in clips by its edges, and putty is not required. The frames are lighter and stronger than those of cast-iron; they can be packed in a small space, and are practically undamaged by railway transport. The frames are particularly applicable to corrugated iron buildings, but they can be built into brickwork, and their appearance can be made artistic.

The Latest Calculating Boy.

M. Inaudi, the young man whose feats of mental computation recently astonished the members of the French Academy of Sciences, possesses the gift of what may be called double action of the brain. He can perform his calculations while speaking or listening to others, as though there was a calculating machine inside his head. At the *séance* in question he was asked to subtract the following numbers, which were simply called out to him :—

4,123,547,238,445,523,831
1,248,126,138,234,129,910

and while talking to those around him he gave the answer correctly. Requested to multiply 452 by 538, he did so at once; and he gave the number whose cube added to its square made 3,600, almost immediately. He was told to square the number 4,801, cut away a figure, divide the difference by 6, and give the square root of the result; and while explaining to the meeting how he performed the above subtraction he suddenly said "I have found the answer," and gave it correctly. Inaudi was born at Onorato in Piedmont in 1867, and is entirely self-taught. His methods of computing are peculiar to himself, and he can solve questions in his head which ordinarily require the use of algebra. He is regarded as a prodigy, and is being examined by a Commission of the Academy.

Soda from Salt.

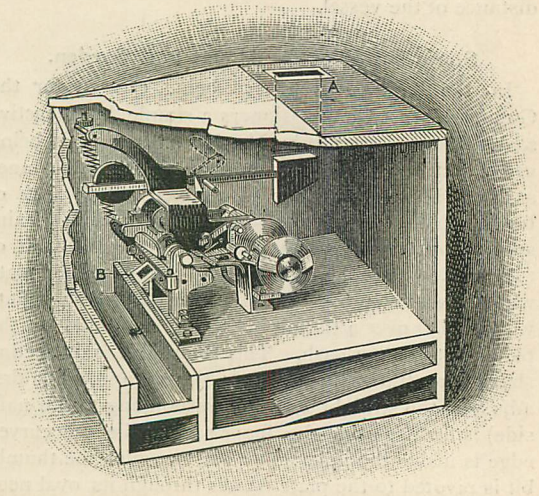
Mr. Greenwood, an English chemist, has invented an electrical process of making caustic soda from common salt—that is to say, chloride of sodium. A current of electricity is passed through a series of tanks containing brine, which is decomposed with the production of chlorine and sodium. By a further process the sodium is converted into caustic soda. Mr. W. H. Preece, the eminent electrician, has examined the process at work, and finds that the cost of breaking up a ton of salt in this manner is £3 7s.; and if water-power is used to generate the current, it can be brought as low as £1 14s. Caustic soda made by the ordinary chemical method sells at £12 a ton; so that, since a ton of salt costs 10s., the caustic soda made by the new process can be sold at one-third the price of the other.

Pure Boron.

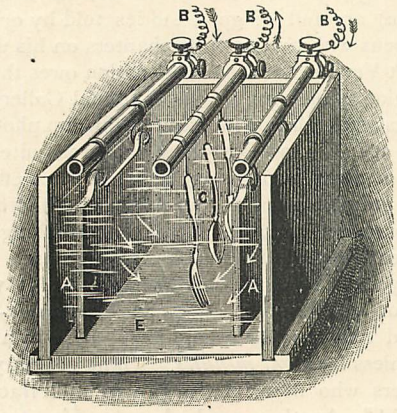
M. Moissan, whose researches on fluorine have been described in the GATHERER, has now succeeded in isolating pure boron. The substance hitherto regarded as amorphous boron is, he shows, largely composed of impurities formed by the boron combining with metals used in the process of production. His new method consists in heating 70 grams of magnesium and 210 grams of boric anhydride in a closed crucible. A violent reaction ensues, the crucible becoming white-hot. On cooling, a reddish-brown mass is found, which on being ground, and washed with water, then with hydrochloric acid, alcoholic potash, hydrofluoric acid, and lastly with distilled water, yields a chestnut powder, consisting of 95 per cent. of boron. Further treatment eliminates the remaining impurities, except a negligible trace.

A Postage Stamp Seller.

Machines for selling postage stamps automatically are likely to come into use before long, and will prove a public convenience. One has been tried and with success by a private advertising company; but what is really wanted is that the Post Office should take the matter up, as one of public importance, and



affix the machines to pillar boxes or the outside of post offices. Already there are two machines which deliver the stamp, unaccompanied by any advertisements or other things. One of these is illustrated in the figure, where A is the slot into which the coin is dropped, and B is the stamp delivered to the purchaser by opening the drawer into which it falls. The other machine has an advantage over this in presenting the stamp to the purchaser through a slot, so that he has only to tear it off by the perforations in the ordinary way. The penny goes in at one slot and the stamp comes out at another. Only one stamp can be obtained at a time as a set of teeth fall into the perforations and hold the next one back unless another coin is dropped into the slot. It is to be hoped that some public-spirited member of Parliament will call the attention of the Postmaster-General to the public service which might be rendered by such machines in the hands of the Post Office.



"Arcas" Silver-Plating.

Silver-plating is apt to tarnish owing to the sulphur in the atmosphere, and to require frequent polishing. Nickel-plating again is attacked by vegetable acids, and is, moreover, liable to crack and peel off. These drawbacks are overcome in the "Arcas" plating by the use of an alloy, whose composition is not disclosed, but which resembles silver, but is more easily cleaned by simply washing the article and rubbing it with dry leather. The hardness of the coating is between that of nickel and pure silver. Iron, steel, German silver, brass, and so on, can be electro-plated with Arcas silver, so that there is a wide field for the application of the process. The figure shows the bath adopted for plating spoons. It consists of a tank of slate containing a chemical solution of the Arcas alloy. Three metal bars, B, B, B, are connected to the dynamo or source of the electrical current. From the two outside bars plates of Arcas alloy, A, A, are suspended in the bath, and from the middle bar the spoons, C, are similarly hung in the solution. The current passes from the "anodes," A, A, to the "cathode," C, that is to say, the spoons, and decomposing the solution in its passage deposits the Arcas metal on the surface of the spoons. Various methods are employed for cleaning the surfaces of the articles to be coated, and after the coating has been given they are properly burnished. The Arcas process is now on view at the Crystal Palace Electrical Exhibition.

The Lung Fish of Queensland.

At the recent meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, held in Hobart Town, Tasmania, Professor W. B. Spencer, of the Melbourne University, read an interesting paper on the Ceratodus, or Lung Fish, which inhabits the Burnett and Mary rivers of Queensland. In this curious animal the swimming bladder has been so modified as to serve for a lung and enable it to breathe the air at will. The Protopterus of Africa is allied to it, and during the dry season it covers itself with mud and lives by means of its lung; but the Ceratodus does not appear to forsake the water. It rises to the surface, and breathes the air with a kind of spouting noise. The lung is very useful to it during the wet season, when the rivers are flooded and the water charged with mud and sand. The Ceratodus is herbivorous, and lives on the seeds of gum-trees which fall into the water.

A Mountain of Silicates.

It is reported from Quebec that a mountain of silicates, capable of being used in manufacturing glass, has been discovered at Kamouraska, in Lower Canada. The Provincial Engineer states that the rock, which is vitrifiable, contains 98 per cent. of pure silica.

A Japanese Harmonium.

Dr. Shohei Tanaka, a graduate of Tokio and Berlin Universities, has been awarded a premium of 1,000 dollars by the Japanese Government for his invention of a new harmonium of pure intonation. It is a keyed instrument, similar to a piano, but having a black note between E and F, and the other black notes divided into two or even three. There are twenty distinct notes in the compass of an octave, instead of twelve as in our instruments of equal temperament. The white notes are tuned to the perfect major scale of C, the E being therefore flatter than the E of the piano. Hence, if it is desired to play on the scale of D, this E, the true major third to C, must not be used. There are other points of difference which need not be detailed.

History in Parallel Columns.

A little work by Mr. R. W. Western, under the title of "Graphic Chronology," has just been published by Mr. Fisher Unwin. Each page deals approximately with a quarter of a century, and shows in a glance who were the men and women of note in that period, at home and abroad, and in every walk of life. The idea is a good one, and is carried out in a way that provides a handy companion to the busy reader.

Sixteenth-Century Writers.

In the eighth volume of his "English Writers" (which has just been published by Messrs. Cassell) Professor Henry Morley brings his story of English Literature down to the year 1579, from the beginning of the 16th century. Spenser and Shakespeare he leaves

for fuller consideration in later volumes, but otherwise he deals comprehensively with the 16th century writers. Few but students know what a valuable and formative influence the writers of this period had on our language and literature. Professor Morley says, in his last leaves to this volume, that it has been the main purpose of his work "to set forth the literature of our country as part of its life, with constant indication of the relation of thought to action, that is to say, of literature to history." The scheme is so good, and Professor Morley so capable a guide, that we hope many of our readers will follow him in this study.

"Phases of Animal Life."

This is the title which Mr. R. Lydekker, B.A., gives to a volume of essays which have previously been published in serial form, and are now collected and issued by Messrs. Longmans. This is hardly a book we should put into the hands of a veritable tyro in natural history, but, on the other hand, it is not so far advanced as to be unintelligible to anyone but an expert. There is certainly a fund of information in it, well put together, and admirably classified.

A Parcels Post Register.

"The Simplex" is a new Parcels Post register, which Messrs. A. Heywood & Son have just issued for use in business houses, and it seems admirably adapted to answer the purpose. It provides spaces for the entry of the date and place of posting, the name and address of the person to whom the parcel is addressed, the weight, the amount of postage, the postmaster's signature, and the office stamp, which practically covers the requirements of such a book.

For School Use.

We are glad to see that Messrs. Longmans have issued in a very cheap and handy form a school edition of Mr. Andrew Lang's charming collection of verse under the title of "The Blue Poetry Book." No better collection could be put in the hands of children, or one more calculated to give them a genuine love for poetry.

Practical Handbooks.

Our readers will remember that some time ago we published a paper on "Bent-Iron Work." Those who desire fuller instruction and guidance than it is possible to give within the space of a magazine article will find them in a very useful and practical "Manual of Instruction for Amateurs in Bent-Iron Work," issued by Mr. L. Upcott Gill. The author is Mr. F. J. Erskine, and his book is well and valuably illustrated.—The second practical work that we wish to speak of is one on the very different subject of "Pigeons," published by Mrs. Alexander Comyns, and written by the Rev. W. F. Lumley, who has succeeded in compressing within very small compass a mass of valuable hints and directions for the housing, management, and rearing of these popular pets.—Another useful handbook is "New-Laid Eggs" (Longmans & Co.), a work of hints for amateur poultry rearers written by Mrs. De Salis, who is well-known as a writer on cookery. We need say no more than that Mrs. De Salis is as practical in her every direction under this head as she has always shown herself when writing on matters culinary.—At the request of the National Health Society, who had been called upon by several County Councils to supply teachers of cottage cookery, Miss Mary Harrison has written "Cookery for Busy Lives and Small Incomes," which has just been published by Messrs. Longmans & Co. But there are many housewives who would find the hints given in Miss Harrison's work extremely useful, although they are not, perhaps, among those for whom the recipes were originally put together.

A Photographer's Recollections.

In the practice of his profession Mr. Vernon Heath has been brought into contact with a large number of well-known people, and his "Recollections" (just published by Messrs. Cassell & Co. in a handsome volume) are full of good stories told by or of them. He opens with two or three chapters on his uncle, Mr. Robert Vernon, to whom the nation owes the Vernon collection of pictures in the National Gallery. Then he goes on to tell how he came to take up photography, which at that time (50 years ago) was quite in its infancy, as the following story shows:—"I chiefly worked in the grounds at and about Ardington, photographing the house, the lake, the church, and anything that was sufficiently artistic in effect for my purpose. One day I essayed to take my uncle's portrait. It was to be done out-of-doors, he sitting in his garden-chair. I warned him that he would have to remain still and motionless for *eight minutes*. Think of this, ye photographers who now take negatives in a fraction of a second!" Another good photographic story is that which Mr. Vernon Heath tells of his portrait of the late Duke of Clarence. "Soon after the birth of the Prince, my mind reverted to the negative which, during the previous summer, I had taken of the Princess, when she came to my studio, for the purpose of Mr. Frith's picture; and taking it, and the one of Mrs. Noble's cot, I so combined them on a print that the Princess was represented standing by the cot, looking down at the child in it. The illusion was perfect, though I desired to accomplish something more. On the day, therefore, of the christening of the Prince Albert Victor, I took, with some hesitation, one of these combined prints to Marlborough House, and had an opportunity of submitting it to the Prince of Wales, who was gracious enough to speak of it in flattering terms. This gave me my cue, and for the sake of making the photograph, I asked His Royal Highness whether, at some convenient opportunity, I might have the privilege of introducing his own child into the cot in lieu of the one then there. The Prince, smiling, said: 'Better leave it as it is; why, at that age, one child is so like another that there can be no necessity for the change.' Nevertheless, I held to my project." But the book is full of good tales, and we can only advise our readers to go to the volume for themselves, and they will be amply repaid.

(*From a Drawing by* MARGARET I. DICKSEE.)

NAILING UP THE ROSE-TREE.

(*See p.* 403.)

BARBARA MERIVALE.

By ARABELLA M. HOPKINSON, Author of "The Probation of Dorothy Travers," "Vere Thornleigh's Inheritance," "A Woman's Strength," etc. etc.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

CENTREWOOD.

"WHETHER it will be a good thing for all of us is, I think, doubtful, but that it will be to the advantage of the village is quite certain. People, whatever their nationality may be, must eat and drink, and therefore, my dear Miss Sanderson, considering the dreadful depression in trade just now at Centrewood, I, for one, shall be thankful to see Denzilstone occupied once more, if only for the sake of the tradespeople and the poor;" and with these words, delivered in her usual energetic manner, the vicar's wife rose to depart, resisting manfully the pressing invitation to stay longer, and discuss the new people at the Great House, and what was best to be done in the event of the impending change there.

"There is nothing whatever to be done," replied Mrs. Merivale briskly, as she fastened her worn and shabby jacket about her throat, "until they have been seen; and there is no doubt that, be they Church people or Dissenters, or——"

"Agnostics," put in Jane Sanderson.

"Unless there is anything socially improper about them—which we have no reason to apprehend—we must all call upon them. No, my dear Jane, thank you, I must not stay. I must go home and see to the boys' lessons, and a hundred other things. I often say I had more leisure when I was in Africa than I have as the wife of the Vicar of Centrewood."

"But cannot pretty Barbara help you with the boys' lessons?" asked Miss Sanderson, a smile lighting up her gentle face, as at some pleasant memory.

Mrs. Merivale gave something like a snort.

"Pretty Barbara!" she exclaimed scornfully. "I should fare very badly if I reckoned on her. The fact is, she has been brought up as a fine lady, and a fine lady she will be to the end of the chapter."

"Oh, Mrs. Merivale!"

But Mrs. Merivale had no wish to pursue the subject any further. With her last words she had passed swiftly out into the hall and through the front door, and was by this time nodding and smiling to the two sisters through the muslin curtains that concealed the mysteries of the Miss Sandersons' drawing-room from the gaze of the Centrewood public.

Jane Sanderson looked at her sister and smiled.

"You certainly have the knack, Mary, of putting your foot into it," she said, in her slow, deliberate manner. "Why will you always speak of Barbara to her stepmother as 'Pretty Barbara'? You know it acts on her as a red flag does on a bull."

"Because I always think of her as pretty Barbara, and it slips out unawares," responded Miss Sanderson; "but it is stupid of me, and I feel vexed with myself the moment I have done it."

"Well, you need not worry yourself about it. All the epithets in the world will not alter the relations of those two to each other. Their natures are radically antagonistic, and will, I fear, always remain so. By the way, did you notice that Mrs. Merivale is determined to plant her foot at Denzilstone at the very earliest opportunity? She will be there before the new-comers have unpacked their boxes, I feel convinced."

"It does not much matter how early the vicar's wife calls; besides which, I do not think Mr. Merivale will allow her to go too soon."

"My dear Mary, if Mrs. Merivale fixes her day for calling at the house, call she will, and, moreover, take Mr. Merivale with her. At any rate, they will be able to report to us what these Denzils are like."

"Most probably very much like other people," said Miss Sanderson; "except, of course, that they are Americans. Why should they not be?"

Jane Sanderson laughed.

"Why, indeed?" she asked, "except that Centrewood has settled that, as they are Americans, they must be something abnormal—for Centrewood, I mean," she added. "Of course Americans are plentiful nowadays in England, but it takes a quarter of a century for this benighted place to get accustomed to a new idea."

"Yes, I am afraid we are rather behind the times," assented Miss Sanderson. "I have no doubt that after all these American Denzils will turn out quite commonplace. At any rate, they come of the old stock. I always forget: was it the first or second baron they had to hark back to to find this Lord Denzil?"

"Oh, Mary! pray don't go through that wearisome history again. You must remember that it was the second baron; and as he was discovered making money in America, Centrewood has decided that there must be something peculiar about him and his opinions. Why, there go Barbara and Mr. Merivale. You see, she has been out with her father, therefore she could not be at home, superintending the boys' lessons;" and Miss Jane advanced to the window, and drew aside the muslin curtains to look out at a sweet girl face that was smiling up at her.

"She is indeed 'pretty Barbara,'" said Miss Sanderson. "She is like a sunbeam going down the street. She always looks so nice, it is a pleasure to see her; there is something so dainty, so——"

"Smart," suggested Jane.

"So well-bred-looking about her. I fancy she is a great comfort to the poor vicar."

"Mary, you are too much addicted to adjectives. Why do you call the vicar poor? He has a beautiful old church, a stupid, but respectable, parish, an excellent hard-working wife, a pretty charming daughter, and a good sprinkling of female worshippers. What more can he desire, except rather more of this world's goods?"

Miss Sanderson coloured faintly.

"I call him poor," she answered, "because he is very poor; secondly, because although Mrs. Merivale is hard-working and energetic, she is not his equal either socially or intellectually, and lastly, I fancy that his present life is not very congenial to him. His heart is in Africa, and of course Centrewood is very different to Africa."

"Mercifully, yes! You and I—but you, in particular, Mary—would fare but badly if it were like Zanzibar. I dare say he does find it, with its pack of women, very humdrum after the excitement of missionary work in East Africa. Still, he might have gone further and have fared worse when he was looking out for a living in England, except in so far as the emolument is concerned: and that, of course, is wretched."

"Oh! indeed he might; and I do not at all intend to decry dear little Centrewood. There is plenty of work to be done in it, as shown by what he has already accomplished. What I mean is that, after seventeen years in Africa, he cannot easily take to English life and work again. Now I must write my letters, and not talk any more."

Meanwhile, Mrs. Merivale hastened home to her boys and her other household cares. She was a woman of superlative energy, who, years ago, had accompanied the then Bishop of Zanzibar to his diocese, to work amongst the natives under him, and who, two years later, had there married the Reverend Charles Merivale, a widower, who had left his only child, a daughter, to be brought up by her mother's relations in England, whilst he devoted himself to missionary work in Africa. How it was he came to marry Susan Wood no one quite knew: he hardly knew himself; but marry her he did, and found himself linked to a shrewd, business-like woman, who had managed the native girls' school most admirably, but was quite incapable of entering into the finer shades of her husband's character, and who was certainly not his equal in either cultivation or refinement.

But in this respect they were no worse off than nine couples out of ten, and they jogged on contentedly together, until Mr. Merivale was driven home summarily by the climate—which he had resisted so long as to completely undermine his health—and ordered to take only light work in the country in England.

Centrewood—a town or a village, whichever you like to call it: it numbered about seventeen hundred souls—happening to fall vacant just about that time, was offered to him through the kind offices of Sir John Philips, who at one time had been governor of one of our African colonies, and who was a great friend of Lord Denzil's. Mr. Merivale accepted it joyfully, foreseeing that seventeen hundred souls must provide him with some work, though light to what he had been accustomed to, and settling down in the quaint old-fashioned vicarage, had commenced collecting his scattered olive-branches once more under the paternal roof.

Three little boys and one little girl had been born to him in Africa. Of these, the three eldest had been shipped to England, to be consigned to their grandfather's and grandmother's—Dr. and Mrs. Wood's—care, whilst the fourth had returned with her parents to England.

And then there was Barbara.

Mr. Merivale felt some misgivings when he thought about Barbara. She was the daughter of his first wife, pretty Barbara Grey, who, with sundry other ladies from the West End of London, had come down once or twice a week to devote herself and her time to the poor of the East End parish which had been his first incumbency. When the engagement between them had been announced, people had blamed the Greys for allowing their daughter to go and work in an unmarried man's parish; nor had the Greys been backward in blaming themselves after the mischief was done. But then, how could they have foreseen what would happen? Was not Barbara quite twenty-eight years of age? Had she not already refused several eligible offers of marriage? Who would have imagined that she would lose her heart to a poor clergyman, working in a miserable parish in one of the most unattractive parts of London?

But having lost her heart, Barbara Grey was determined to have her own way, and Charles Merivale, and no other, should be her husband. Was he not a perfect gentleman; and, though poor, of good birth, a man of wide and varied culture, of saintly life? What more could she desire? And marry him she did, and at the end of a year of unmixed happiness left him a forlorn widower, with a tiny baby girl on his hands. Then it was that Mr. Merivale, broken-hearted at his loss, decided to devote himself to missionary work in Africa, and leaving his little daughter with the Greys, proceeded to Zanzibar.

During his stay there of seventeen years, he only came home twice, and each time he found his little Barbara blossoming like a rose, surrounded with love and care, a very spoilt, pretty, and charming little person, who had very decided opinions as to her likes and dislikes, and who was quite certain that her grave reserved father was quite the nicest person she knew.

And now Barbara was to join the general gathering at Centrewood; and how would she like it? How would she get on with her stepmother and in her new surroundings, after the spoiling, the luxury, of Eaton Square? No wonder that Mr. Merivale's heart misgave him when he asked himself these questions, and that it crossed his mind, had he been wise in allowing his daughter to be brought up in a manner so unsuitable to her real circumstances? But it was too late to repent now. Barbara was eighteen; her education was completed, and it was quite time for her to come home, more especially as during the last few

months her grandmother's circumstances had altered considerably, owing to the death of her husband.

What it cost the girl to leave Mrs. Grey and her other relatives no one ever knew. She arrived at the Vicarage with a bright face and a cheerful, winning manner. Her stepmother received her very kindly, her father with an expansiveness he but rarely displayed, the children with a great deal of curiosity, and she became an accomplished fact.

More than a year had passed away since that May afternoon when she first set foot in Centrewood, and she had settled down into her place—which place was chiefly with her father: for, from the first, she and Mrs. Merivale had found out that they were not congenial to one another. Undoubtedly she was not very useful in the household, for she had not been brought up to be useful. She was amazingly ignorant on some points which from her infancy had been matters of course to Mrs. Merivale, knew nothing of cookery beyond making a cake or toffee, with a reckless consumption of butter which would have supplied the family for a week: had not so much as learnt to darn her own stockings, and could not have made one of her own dresses to save her life: that is to say, she thought she could not. On the other hand, she could play the violin with unusual skill and feeling, could keep the children quiet by the hour together with stories woven out of her own fertile brain, could help her father to construe the abstruse German theological works that littered his study table, and if she could not make a dress, had the inborn gift of putting one on to perfection.

All these qualities, in addition to her pretty face and taking manners, made Barbara a popular personage. She was asked here and there to play her violin, to make a fourth at tennis, to stay a day or two; and whilst Mrs. Merivale toiled away at the daily drudgery of home or parish, Barbara would be disporting herself with the neighbouring gentry, sitting in her father's room, writing for him in her clear bold handwriting, or practising the violin in the seclusion of her own bedroom.

All this made Mrs. Merivale very angry. She was jealous of Barbara, of Mr. Merivale's affection for her, and of the fact that she held the key to his heart, and could fit it into the lock so easily—a lock which she secretly felt she had never been able to turn: jealous that she was so much better-looking than her own children: jealous of the notice taken of her.

"Yes," she murmured to herself as, with hurried steps, she walked down the village street, the echo of Miss Sanderson's "Pretty Barbara" still ringing in her ears—"she may be 'pretty Barbara,' but she is 'useless Barbara' too, and I mean to tell her—and plainly, too—the state of her father's affairs, and how if he died to-morrow we should all be paupers. If she had a spark of proper pride, she would try—as hundreds of girls do try nowadays—to earn a little money, instead of dressing herself up to look pretty. Pretty, indeed! It really does provoke me to hear the nonsense people talk about mere physical beauty; but then dear Miss Sanderson, although a sweet good creature, has not half Jane's wits. Well, when I call at the 'House,' I shall not take Barbara with me;" and, with this resolution, Mrs. Merivale opened her front door, and passed into the Vicarage.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

THE DENZILS.

WHEN Barbara Merivale first arrived at Centrewood, she was enchanted with the little place, and she was not singular. Anything more picturesque than its gabled houses, narrow uphill streets, and overhanging eaves, its rolling downs in the distance, bounded on three sides by a broken chain of blue misty hills, its fern-clad lanes, breezy commons, and dark woods, she, in her youthful enthusiasm, could not conceive. And then there was Denzilstone. Its great massive gates opened into the village from a long avenue of magnificent Spanish chestnuts, beyond and around which stretched the park, all ups and downs, now disclosing a gleam of silvery water, now dipping down and losing itself in the woods, embracing in a maze of greenery little Centrewood, embosomed in its midst. One and a half miles from the gates stood the House, on a knoll of rising ground: a grand old Elizabethan structure, perfect as it had first been built.

No wonder that artists crowded to Centrewood in the summer, putting up at the picturesque old inn, the "Holly," which stood just at the entrance to the famous Holly walks which formed one of the lions of the place, and that Mr. Merivale had somewhat startled his flock by telling them they ought to thank God for surrounding them with such conspicuous beauties of His creation.

For the Centrewood people were neither better nor worse than their fellow-creatures who lived in the uglier parts of England. They were, perhaps, a trifle slower and stupider, glorying in their ill-paved streets, in the pig-headedness of their fellow-townspeople; for had not the late Lord Denzil said that he would not have Centrewood re-paved for the world? and had not my lady declared that the benightedness of the country was refreshing after the glaring enlightenment of London?

Ah! the late Lord and Lady Denzil. When would Centrewood cease to lament them? They had been of the type of nobility such as was more common in England fifty years ago than it is now: my lord a *grand seigneur* to the tips of his fingers, haughty, kind-hearted, meddlesome, and altogether respectable; my lady a trifle eccentric and capricious, but enacting the part of Lady Bountiful to her poorer neighbours with a liberality and condescension that won all hearts. The family had represented Centrewood and the Centrewood division of the county in Parliament for generations, and had lived amongst their people, sharing their joys and sorrows, but at the same time never permitting the great gulf that lay between them to be forgotten. And now that branch of the family had passed away, carried off by one of those tragedies that sometimes fall on peaceful families, shaking them to their very foundations. The misfortunes had commenced with the death of the second son from diphtheria; a year later his only brother, the heir to the

title, had been killed out hunting, and this calamity had so preyed upon his father that he had gone out of his mind and committed suicide. Poor Lady Denzil, left with two unmarried daughters, had been only too glad to turn her back on Denzilstone, entailed on heirs male, which to her would be for ever associated with the tragic deaths of her son and husband, and to retire to her dower-house, situated in the neighbourhood of London. And meanwhile, search was made for the next heir, for he belonged to a younger branch of the family, that had separated from the parent stem more than a century before, and had finally betaken itself to America. He was not, however, difficult to find, being a well-known man in Philadelphia, where he had amassed a large fortune, which made him quite ready to step into the shoes of his distant relative, and to reign at Denzilstone in his stead.

But he was a long time in coming to claim his own; and meanwhile, Centrewood had plenty of time to fabricate endless stories of the new Denzils, and to make up its mind that, seeing they were Americans, they would of course be Republicans, and if Republicans, why, naturally everything that was bad. Barbara and Jane Sanderson alone of the female portion of the community ventured to combat these opinions; but then, Jane Sanderson was known to hold very advanced opinions on most subjects, whilst Barbara, having lived in London, had come in contact with some very charming inhabitants of the States, one of whom had married her uncle, and was her special friend.

And now at last, after quite a year's interregnum, the Denzils had arrived at Denzilstone, and speculation was rife as to whether they would appear on the following Sunday at Centrewood or Crowstead Church, or—which was very possible—go to no church at all.

Mrs. Merivale, as she tied her faded bonnet-strings, that Sunday morning, under her chin, felt convinced that they would come to Centrewood to hear her husband preach, whilst pretty Barbara, as she settled her hat on her wavy auburn hair, preparatory to starting for Sunday-school, was, for once in her life, of the same opinion as her stepmother.

For she alone, of all the family, had seen one of the new-comers. Walking up the village street the previous afternoon with Mary Thornton, her great friend, the two girls, on turning a corner, had come suddenly face to face with a strange young man, tall, more than commonly good-looking, and unmistakably an Englishman and a gentleman.

"Do you know who that gentleman is, Joe?" inquired Mary of a small urchin standing by, as soon as the stranger was out of earshot, not heeding Barbara's "Don't, Mary."

"'E be from the great 'ouse. I sees 'im a comin' out o' the gates," promptly responded Joe; whereupon Mary turned to her companion.

"Come, Barbara," she said, "that is indeed a good specimen of the family. He does not look a bit like an American, does he?" she asked, suddenly remembering that she had never seen one of the race.

"No," answered Barbara, "not a bit, does he?"

Indeed, Barbara did not think so. He looked far more like the young men she had been accustomed to see at her grandmother's and uncle's houses in London—something very different from the doctors and solicitors, and even from Mary Thornton's good-tempered but uninteresting brother, or from the Miss Sandersons' clever, but spectacled and silent, nephew, or Colonel Parry's short, funny-looking son in the Navy, who were the chief specimens of the male sex at Centrewood.

And now, as Barbara's thoughts reverted, by no means for the first time since her encounter, to that fair aristocratic face, to those blue eyes that had rested on her for one swift second, she smiled again, then seizing her books and gloves, she ran down the stairs, and up the street, after her father, unheeding the cry, "Late as usual, Barbara!" from Mrs. Merivale.

But alas! for the Centrewood gossips. No strange face disturbs their devotions; no Denzils rustle down the nave to the seat in the Denzil Chapel, and they must reluctantly conclude that the family from the Great House has either betaken itself to dreary little Crowstead, or—which is the more probable—has not gone to church at all.

Mrs. Merivale called Barbara a fine lady, and Barbara, on her side, considered Mrs. Merivale penurious, and, as she put it, when in a mild frame of mind, very *bourgeoise*. They were both right and both wrong. Barbara had been brought up as a fine lady, to do nothing for herself, without any fault of her own, and Mrs. Merivale was penurious because her circumstances demanded penury; but, on the other hand, Barbara had plenty of good useful stuff in her, whilst Mrs. Merivale would have been willing enough to spend money had she had it to spend. Hers was the dictum of prejudice and jealousy, whilst Barbara's was the unthinking harsh judgment of youth, that is so prone to pass opinion on subjects it does not understand; and her stepmother knew this.

"I will enlighten her before long," she said to herself that Sunday at dinner, as she saw, or fancied she saw, Barbara look critically at the food set before her. "I will tell her plainly how matters stand, and see if I cannot stir her up to *do* something. Why, even Mary Thornton, who has not half her resources, makes some money by her bees, though how she does it I can't think, considering how cheap honey is."

Barbara went through the day much as usual, quite unaware of the rod in pickle in store for her, occasionally turning her thoughts to the stranger of yesterday, and exciting her stepmother's wrath by inconsiderate conduct, such as bringing all the new puppies into the drawing-room, and in the middle of reading a story, provided for them by their mother, to the children, suddenly throwing the book down, and exclaiming—"I cannot go on reading this odious little goody book any longer, children: it is too repulsive. If any of you were to imitate the good little boy, I would never speak to you again, so either bring me another book or let me tell you a story, but never bring me that nauseous little volume again."

"Barbara?" came from the back room, where Mrs. Merivale sat writing.

"Yes?" defiantly.

"*I* gave the children that book."

"I am sure you would not have done so if you had read it. It is a detestable, canting little book."

"Now look here, Barbara: children, go into the garden, all of you, and be careful not to make yourselves in a mess"—and Mrs. Merivale advanced from her writing table and sat down opposite Barbara, fixing on her her hard, small grey eyes, and assuming a judicial aspect, that made her stepdaughter inclined to laugh—"look here, Barbara," she repeated, "it is time that you and I understood each other: time, too, that you understood your position."

Barbara, who, I am sorry to say, had been thinking what a very commonplace face her stepmother had, wondering whether she ever had been nice-looking, and how her father came to marry her, lifted her pretty eyebrows with surprise.

"My position!" she exclaimed, rather drawing up her slender white throat.

"Yes, your position, and my position, and that of your brothers and sisters; for although you may think yourself vastly superior to us all, you are your father's daughter, nevertheless."

"Of course I am."

"Don't interrupt; and if anything happened to him, you would be a pauper, or nearly one, as much as I and the children."

Mrs. Merivale's excitement had carried her away; she had not intended coming to the point either so quickly or so crudely, and she repented herself as she saw Barbara's eyes flash with wrath, and the hot colour flame up into her cheeks.

"A pauper!" she said slowly.

"Yes," said Mrs. Merivale, putting restraint on herself, and remembering—too late, alas!—that it was Sunday, and that she and Barbara would go to evening church with a new sore between them. "It is a strong word to use, no doubt, but it is no use mincing matters. Paupers are people who have no money, and if your father died, we should have none, although you would have a little. That book," waxing wroth again, "that you ridiculed to the children was given me by my

"'DO YOU KNOW WHO THAT GENTLEMAN IS, JOE?'" (*p.* 388).

friend Miss Dyer, who wrote it. *I* cannot afford to buy all the nonsense that is brought out for children nowadays; I give mine what I have got; nice wholesome stories with good morals, and what must you do but set them against them? You come here, with your airs and graces, with 'Grannie' this and 'Grannie' that, and your London ideas, playing the fine lady in a home where it is as much as we can do to keep the wolf from the door, and pay the bills, and——"

Mrs. Merivale paused for breath, and Barbara lifted her pale face, from whence all the colour had fled.

"I did not know," she said slowly; "I did not understand——"

"Of course you did not. How should you, brought up as you have been, so absurdly unsuitably to your circumstances——"

"There is no necessity to mention my bringing up or my grandmother, please."

"But I must mention them. Your bringing up has been unsuitable to your position, but you have, no doubt, received a very superior education, and yet you do nothing with it. You can speak French and German fluently, you play the violin very nicely, you can dabble with your paint-box by the hour, and yet what good is it all to you?"

"What good is it to me?" with kindling eyes. "Why, every good. Isn't my violin my greatest joy? Cannot I help father a little with my German, and don't I try and talk French with the children, only they won't speak it."

"Yes, yes, you do all that, but that does not bring grist to the mill; and you spend more money than all the rest of the family put together."

"I have only spent what Grannie gave and sent me." She did not add that it had nearly all been disbursed upon her father and the house. "But I see what you mean," she continued. "You think I ought to go out as a governess, or something of that kind."

"No, I do not go so far as that; but I do mean that now that you are grown up it is time you put your shoulder to the wheel, and took your share of the family burdens. In fact, you should try and turn your talents and your education to some account."

"To money, you mean," answered Barbara bitterly.

Mrs. Merivale nodded. The sun came pouring in at the window; it fell on Barbara's pale face, on her auburn hair that lay so prettily around her temples; it fell, too, on Mrs. Merivale's lined, eager, anxious countenance, on her faded worn dress, and a sudden pity filled her stepdaughter's heart.

"I will do what I can," she said gently; "but," she added, with a very real scorn of herself, "I do not think either my talents or my education are sufficient to bring me in much. The world is overcrowded with mediocrity already."

"No," said Mrs. Merivale, calmly pulling the girl down from her high horse, "I do not in the least think you are likely to make a fortune. But you might give violin lessons; you really do play very nicely."

Barbara smiled at the commendation. Her stepmother had neither taste for or knowledge of music.

"Or you might give morning lessons in French, German, and music; in fact, there are a hundred ways in which you could do something. Where there's a will there's a way. All I know is that, with my far less pretentious education, if I were in your place, I would be up and doing."

"Yes?" she answered softly, once more facing her stepmother.

"You may thus help a tiny bit in lightening the load of anxiety that hangs like a pall over your father and me."

Barbara's face softened. "Mrs. Merivale," she said, "I was not aware of all this: indeed I was not. Of course I knew that we were poor, but then, I knew lots of people in London who were poor, and yet lived very comfortably, and I was quite ignorant of father's private affairs, and whether he had money or not. I never thought about it."

"No," said Mrs. Merivale, "you never thought about it. That is just the gist of the whole matter. You have never thought either, I dare say, that this is a wretchedly poor living, that your father's health was shattered in Africa, or of a thousand other things that are like so many nightmares to him and to me. That is why I have told you all this. It is time you began to think."

"Yes, it is," she answered, a sudden sternness coming into her young face, then breaking down a little. "Is father ill?" she asked.

"Not now at this moment, but he often ails, and——Well, never mind that."

"But I do mind it," said Barbara. "You must tell me. I have been told half; I ought to know the whole."

"You do know the whole. Did I not mention that Africa shattered his health? Come, there is the tea-bell. Let us go down to the children; and mind, not a word to your father of what I have told you. Come."

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

DENZILSTONE.

BARBARA lay awake the greater part of that night, rehearsing over and over again all that her stepmother had told her, thinking of her father's pale intellectual face as he stood up in the pulpit that evening, and preached on the beauty of self-sacrifice, thinking, too, of the inequalities and injustice of the world that could consign a man who could preach such a sermon to an obscure country townlet, and holding at arms' length the vision of that terrible time when they would all be paupers. Dreaming, too, of Grannie, in her seventy-sixth year, whose heart it would break if her Barbara were to go out as a governess, and waking with a start to consider for the twentieth time how she could best turn her "absurd education" to account.

Yes, there were plenty of ways of so doing; the thing was to find out which was the best to pursue. By the time the dawn had begun to glimmer through her shutters, she saw herself giving French, German, and violin lessons to half the children in the neighbourhood at wonderfully remunerative prices, procuring

for her father all manner of comforts, for her brothers a good education, building one airy fabric after another, to come down to a breakfast-table badly laid, to weak flavourless tea, and all the usual accompaniments of poverty. With a pale, but determined face she sat down to the family meal, which had assumed for her a fresh aspect, as had also her father's worn thin countenance. It brightened into a smile as he saw Barbara bestirring herself with the children. Her beauty, her grace, were a pleasure to him, in the atmosphere of sordid care that Mrs. Merivale had the knack of creating around her.

"My little Barbara," as he called her, in spite of her very respectable height, "will soon learn to be useful," he thought to himself, as he watched her moving about the table; but the pleasant meditation was soon interrupted.

"Charles," said his wife, "I am going to call at Denzilstone to-day. Of course you will come with me?"

Mr. Merivale was a shy man. He immediately began to cast about in his mind how he could get out of this call.

"Isn't it rather early to go, my dear?" he suggested mildly, but being met with a decided negative, he succumbed without further effort, consenting to start at three o'clock, whilst it was intimated to Barbara that she was to stay at home, to mind the children. They were always good with her, so this was no hardship, but it was an effort to go to her stepmother, and offer to begin that very afternoon to teach the two elder boys French systematically.

"Well, I am glad, Barbara, you are no longer going to be a drone in the hive," was the ungracious response, causing the girl to hurry away with heightened colour, and a murmured—

"What is the use of trying to do anything for a woman like that?"

Nevertheless, when, a few minutes later, Mr. Merivale came to look for her to assist him in writing out some notices, he found her seated in the dining-room, surrounded by books and copy-books, patiently drumming French grammar into her brothers' young and truly John Bullish ideas.

"That is right, my child," he said, without mentioning his own wants. "I think you are trying to be useful, my little Barbara, aren't you?" Barbara answered him with her sweetest and brightest smile, whilst inwardly her conscience pricked her.

"So father thinks me useless, too," she thought to herself, and forthwith threw herself with greater vigour than before into grappling with Charlie and Bob's unmistakably British pronunciation of the French language.

Arrived at Denzilstone, Mr. and Mrs. Merivale were shown not into the sunny octagon room, as formerly under the old *régime*, but into the large, rather formal, Gainsborough room—as it was called from the many Gainsboroughs hung on its walls—into the presence of a lady, who was reclining on a sofa, drawn up by a blazing fire, although the month was July, on her delicate features the evident stamp of ill-health, which somehow seemed to jar with her very elaborately dressed hair and handsome dress.

"I am sorry I cannot rise to greet you," she said, with an unmistakable, but not exaggerated, American accent, "but I am an invalid. I have a very weak back, and to-day is one of my bad days, but I am glad to welcome you."

"Thank you," said Mr. Merivale; then seating himself by her side, "I am very sorry to hear that you are such an invalid," he added, with a certain hearty simplicity, peculiar to himself, which constituted one of his chief attractions.

"Yes," she answered; "and I am just sorry for myself in this lonely place. I have always been accustomed to the city, where my friends would be coming in to see me, and where my parlour was always full; but here there is no one to come."

"I assure you, you are mistaken, Lady Denzil: there is very good society about here," interposed Mrs. Merivale. "Plenty of nice people."

"Are there?" queried Lady Denzil. "I am glad to hear it; but from these windows I can't see a house, a chimney, nothing but green, green, green everywhere. Mr.—Lord Denzil, and my son and daughter are enchanted with it all, but I don't think I am. And I don't understand English ways and English servants, although I do think their manners are pleasanter than ours."

"It must, of course, be a change at first," said Mr. Merivale gently, "but you will soon get accustomed to it, and like it, perhaps. After all, there is not such a great difference between English and Americans: we belong to the same race, and see how we appreciate each other's literature."

"And with this large house," struck in Mrs. Merivale, feeling a sublime contempt for Lady Denzil's ignorance, as she dubbed it—"you need never be lonely; you can always have it full of guests."

"Yes, but, you see, we do not understand your English country house life. My husband was saying last night that it is practically unknown in the States. Besides, how could I, with my health, be troubled with a house full of guests? I wish Lord Denzil was in," she added plaintively, turning to Mr. Merivale; "but he is out all day."

"And meanwhile, I have never properly introduced myself," said Mr. Merivale. "Perhaps you may know, though, that I am the Vicar of Centrewood."

"Centrewood, Centrewood—that is the little town, they call it, just outside the gates over there, is it not? We drove through it from the station. I thought it looked a wretched tumble-down place."

"We think it very picturesque," answered Mr. Merivale, smiling, "and pride ourselves on its old crooked houses and narrow ill-paved streets. But the church is specially interesting: it is a very fine specimen of Norman architecture, and is full of Denzil monuments: some very beautiful, and fairly perfect. You are right, however, to a certain degree: some of our cottages are tumble-down."

"My husband talks of doing a great deal here; the place must be very much altered before we can really

settle in it. Fancy, there is no telephone in this large house, no electric light, only a little gas, and no piazza. I do like a piazza."

"Yes, they are very pleasant in a hot country; but we English, we usually go straight out of doors or retire within."

"Yes, I shall get accustomed to your ways, I dare say, in time; besides, I mean to persuade my husband to build a piazza. Ah! there he is at last," as the window was thrown up, and a tall, keen-featured, middle-aged man entered, followed by three young people: a girl with an abundance of almost sandy hair, most elaborately dressed; the young man whom Barbara had encountered in Centrewood the previous Saturday; and finally another young man, about twenty-eight years of age, plain, thin, and tall, but redeemed from downright ugliness by a pair of singularly thoughtful, intelligent eyes.

"My husband, my daughter—our cousin Mr. Richmond, my son," introduced Lady Denzil, whilst Lord Denzil seated himself by Mr. Merivale.

"You are the parson here, I know," he said, "though I am not sure whether you come from Centrewood or Crowstead."

"I am the Vicar of Centrewood," responded Mr. Merivale, not very much impressed by the new lord's manner.

"And half Centrewood, and more, belongs to me, I understand; and a nice ramshackly place it is, too. I suppose you want me to pull it down and build it up again."

"No," answered Mr. Merivale; "we should feel very much aggrieved, I fear, if you were to do so. It would destroy the character of the place; but," he added, "I think your tenants who live in the dilapidated houses, of which there are a very few, would be glad if they were put into repair."

"Ah! there it is: I thought so. Judging from the looks of the cottages, I should say it had been very hard to get anything out of my predecessor."

"Not at all," responded Mr. Merivale, a trifle stiffly. "Perhaps he left things just a little too much to Mr. Holmes, the agent, but most of the houses are in good repair internally, though he would not re-build them, for fear of destroying the picturesqueness of the village, but they are as sound as he could make them without pulling them down. He was a very good landlord, but he has been dead more than a year."

"Just so. Ay, he was a good fellow altogether. What did he go and shoot himself for, I wonder? I remember him when I was a little lad so high"—holding his hand about a yard above the ground—"and he was a young man in the Life Guards. I came over here with my father, and stayed a fortnight at this place; and glad I was to get away from it, I can tell you. The grandeur just stifled me. I little thought I should ever come to live here. Somehow it does not seem grand to me now. In some ways rather a poor sort of place, take it all round. I am going to live in it as it is for a few months, and consider, meanwhile, how I shall make it really habitable."

Meanwhile, the rest of the party had grouped themselves about and around Mrs. Merivale and Lady Denzil; Mr. Richmond had seated himself between the two, whilst Miss Denzil hovered about without settling down, and Mr. Denzil, after a careful survey of Mrs. Merivale, retired into a window to read a letter. Tea was brought up; Mr. Merivale and my lord had risen and strolled out into the garden, in the eagerness of their conversation, which had strayed far beyond Centrewood and its limits; whilst Mr. Richmond—in whom, had Mrs. Merivale been more a woman of the world, she would have recognised the professional stayer-out in country houses—kept up a ceaseless flow of small talk and anecdote, against which Mrs. Merivale's rather abrupt style of conversation and Lady Denzil's quiet drawl had no chance.

But they did not desire a chance. All three ladies were only too delighted to listen to the sparkling talk of this good-looking young London man, who was so kind as to tell them all the last anecdotes, bon-mots, and gossip of the great world, saying the severest things with the sweetest of smiles, and at the same time handing the innumerable dainty dishes with the dexterity of a German waiter. Gradually, however, the conversation—partly in deference to Mrs. Merivale, who was distinctly local in her ideas—worked round to Centrewood, and as he helped himself to tea-cake, "You have a beauty at Centrewood," he remarked carelessly, whilst Miss Denzil left off playing with her pug and pricked up her ears. "I met her on Saturday."

"A beauty!" exclaimed Mrs. Merivale, with a puzzled expression of countenance. "There are some nice-looking girls about in the neighbourhood: Juliet Parry, Emily Williams, and, let me see, who else? yes, there is Mrs. Denville at Asprey, who is certainly pretty; but she is away, and I think I should hardly call any of them beauties."

"Taste differs so often on that point," rejoined Mr. Richmond, with his prettiest smile. "The young lady—she was not married, I should say—that I met was certainly very good-looking. I told you about her, Minnie, didn't I?" turning to Miss Denzil.

"You said something about a handsome girl," responded Minnie rather grudgingly, "and you called her a harmony in grey."

"Yes, so I did, of course. I had forgotten that. The beauty had some sort of grey dress and hat on."

"Then she must have been Barbara, my——our daughter," replied Mrs. Merivale. "She wore her grey dress and hat on Saturday, I remember, when she went to the Manor for tennis."

"Indeed," said Mr. Richmond carelessly, but with an almost imperceptible gleam in his dark blue eyes, and a compliment trembling on his lips, which a glance at Miss Denzil served to repress.

"You have a daughter?" queried Lady Denzil. "Minnie, that will be nice for you. Minnie is lonely here; she was accustomed at Philadelphia to go around with her friends, and she will miss it, I am sure."

"What is going around with your friends, Min?" murmured Richmond, hardly taking pains to repress a

smile at his hostess's Americanisms. "Does it consist in walking about in herds, or what? I am quite ready to go around with you to any extent."

Miss Denzil looked up.

"You are just laughing at me and mother," she said; "it is very unkind of you."

"Laughing at you! No, indeed; as though I would do such a thing!"

"Yes, she is a very good performer indeed on the violin," Mrs. Merivale was saying in her rather strident voice to Lady Denzil, "I am very anxious to procure her some pu——" but the words whereby she had intended launching Barbara into earning her living died away on her lips, for she suddenly became aware that Mr. Denzil was standing close by her, and uncomfortably conscious of his gaze.

"Mother," he said, "don't make Mr. Merivale's tea; he and father are gone out."

"Are they?" said Lady Denzil. "I had not noticed it. Won't you have any tea, Oliver?"

"No, thank you. I must go and write my letters at once if I am to save the post." Then turning to Mrs. Merivale: "Will you bring your daughter here next time you come?" he asked. "I am sure my mother would like to hear her play the violin, if she would not mind. Shouldn't you, mother?"

"Yes, indeed I should," responded Lady Denzil quite heartily, as she glanced affectionately at her son. "Val," turning to Mr. Richmond, "will you go and find Mr. Merivale, and bring him in to tea?"

"I heard my lord beginning on the subject of the tariff to him," responded Richmond; "and if that is the case, I warn you, Mrs. Merivale, that your husband need not expect to be home until dinner-time. Come, Minnie, shall we go together, and rescue him for tea?"

The two disappeared through the window, and Mrs. Merivale heaved a small sigh of relief. Charming as was Mr. Richmond, evidently as he had admired Barbara, still the parish and its wants lay heavily on her mind, and she was glad to have Lady Denzil all to herself, in order to lay them before her, and also, if possible, to complete that sentence about Barbara procuring pupils that had been nipped in the bud. Mr. Merivale was no good at all in the way of begging. He had a horror of it, which was preposterous in a man who had been a missionary; but so it was, and Mrs. Merivale declared that she was obliged to undertake that department of her husband's duty. To tell the truth, she enjoyed it as much as he disliked it; the contrast exactly illustrated the difference in their characters.

So Mrs. Merivale prepared her guns and opened the attack; she was an old hand at the work, and was well qualified for it, for she was business-like, and instinctively one felt that whatever money she was entrusted with she would use with scrupulous economy, and to the best advantage.

Lady Denzil listened, or rather did not listen. The whole subject bored her, and she would willingly have handed over so many dollars to be quit of it. But Mrs. Merivale would not let her off. She went religiously through the category of the Centrewood good works, only to be chilled, not daunted, by Lady Denzil's indifferent answers.

"You must tell Lord Denzil about them all, please, Mrs. Merivale. He is a great philanthropist: he gave away thousands of dollars in Philadelphia; and my son, he is interested in those things too. I am far too

"HE SAT DOWN TO LISTEN TO BARBARA" (*p.* 395).

great an invalid to look after the poor. And now tell me about your daughter. Do you think she will come and see me? I like young girls, and in Philadelphia my parlour was always full of them. I like to see their fresh faces."

A sudden hope rose in Mrs. Merivale's heart. Why should not Barbara become a sort of daily companion to Lady Denzil? She had pretty ways, taking manners—the post would suit her admirably. She determined to take the bull by the horns, and to make a try for it.

"Barbara will be delighted to come and see you whenever you like, Lady Denzil," she responded eagerly, "and to be with you as long as you like. She shall bring her violin, too. The fact is, her father and I are very anxious that she should have some employment, for we cannot afford the luxury of an idle grown-up daughter."

"But she will marry, Mrs. Merivale?" suggested Lady Denzil, who either did not, or would not, see whither her visitor's remarks were tending.

"She may or she may not, and meanwhile, she ought to be turning her talents to account. She is a pretty girl, very accomplished, and plays the violin charmingly. I want her to give lessons in it, and I am looking out for pupils for her now."

So now the murder was out, and Lady Denzil took it very calmly: in quite the spirit Mrs. Merivale could have wished.

"You had better send her up here to help me pass away these long hours with her music, and with reading to me. I like the English accent: it is very pretty; and if she pleases me, and Lord Denzil would approve, well——" She smiled shrewdly. She had understood Mrs. Merivale, and rather liked her for her bluff honesty. Mrs. Merivale smiled in return, for she had gained her point before her husband appeared on the scene: which was what she desired. She was not a minute too soon. Before the smile had died away on her lips the window was once more thrown open, and Mr. Merivale came in, followed by the rest of the party.

Five minutes later he and his wife were retracing their steps down the avenue, Mrs. Merivale feeling quite five years younger than she had a few hours previously.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

THE CONCERT.

IT was the afternoon of the next day, and Barbara was on her way up to the "House." In her hand she held her violin-case. Tenderly she carried it, her best treasure, as she walked swiftly up the street, and turned in at the great iron gates that opened into the village.

Half an hour later—for the avenue was a very long one—her heart beating faster than usual, partly from shyness, partly from expectation, she was being ushered into the presence of Lady Denzil. As she entered she gave a quick glance round the room, but there was no one there but the invalid on the sofa, who half rose, and then fell back again amongst her cushions, as Barbara came forward with a shy, but not awkward, air.

"My father told me you were so kind as to ask me to come this afternoon, Lady Denzil," she said. "He told me to bring my fiddle."

Lady Denzil looked at her wistfully for a moment before she spoke. "What a sweet-looking girl!" she thought to herself. "How I wish——" But whatever the wish might be, she hastened to cut it short.

"I am glad you are come, Miss Merivale," she said hurriedly, "very glad. Minnie, my daughter, should have been in to receive you, but," with a little sigh, "she is out somewhere. I think they are all out," she added; "so you will have to play to me alone, without an accompaniment. Shall you mind that?"

"No, not at all," she answered; "I shall like it. Father told me I was to play to you." Lady Denzil gave a pleased smile.

"Your father is kind," she said, "to remember my wishes, although I think it was to Mrs. Merivale I mentioned them; still, of course, it is the same thing. Now, before you begin to play you must sit down here by me, and tell me all about yourself, your family, and the people who live round and about this place."

Barbara did as she was bid, and, sitting down by the sofa, began to give Lady Denzil selections from her family history, starting with the fact that she had three little brothers and a baby sister, and that Mrs. Merivale was her stepmother.

"Ah! Val said he was sure of it last night," exclaimed Lady Denzil; "but I must not interrupt you, my dear; go on. And so your father married again in Africa, do you say?"

Barbara continued her narrative, but with distracted attention. She was wondering whether "Val" could be the good-looking young man she had seen on Saturday, and whether he would, by any chance, appear upon the scene. Nevertheless, she contrived to make Lady Denzil laugh more than once, as she gave her the history of some of the families in the neighbourhood, together with their various idiosyncrasies, in a bright amusing way that charmed the invalid.

"You have made me laugh more than I have done since I have been in Europe," she said at last, not noticing how Barbara had carefully selected her position so as to command the windows, and how her eyes roamed over the lawns and flower-beds as though in search of someone. But no one came, and, with a distinct sense of disappointment, she at last took up her violin, and, attuning it to her mood, began to play a soft wailing *adagio*, that fitted in only too well with poor Lady Denzil's yearning for her native land.

Before she had come to the end of it the door opened, and someone came in. She lifted her little round chin from her violin, and looked up eagerly. Her eyes encountered a pair of keen dark ones that she had never seen before, set in a face so plain that she was justified when she, later in the day, described it, with youthful vehemence, as downright ugly. Yes, Oliver Denzil was very plain, for there was nothing in his face to redeem it from ugliness but

the vivid intelligence that spoke out of every feature, and especially out of those same eyes that were resting with such satisfaction at this moment on Barbara's fair face. For the rest, in spite of his loosely-made clothes, his rugged, irregular features, he looked like a gentleman, and when you had mentioned that, and that his eyes were good, you had said all that there was to say in favour of his personal appearance. With a sense almost of injury, Barbara withdrew her glance from him, and let it rest once more on her violin.

"Miss Merivale, this is my son," said Lady Denzil, her countenance lighting up as she spoke. "Oliver—Miss Merivale. You remember her father and mother were here yesterday."

"Yes, I remember," said Mr. Denzil, as he took Barbara's outstretched hand in his. "And so you have been playing your fiddle to my mother? That is very kind of you," he continued, in a curiously deep but not unpleasant voice, and with a strong American accent.

"Yes," said Barbara, conscious that the new-comer felt kindly towards her, and that just now she did not recriprocate his sentiments, so much did she wish that he had been someone else.

"Won't you go on?" he continued. "I shall like to listen as much as my mother."

"Val ought to be here," interposed Lady Denzil. "Mr. Richmond, our cousin," she went on to explain, "he plays the 'cello beautifully, and is *very, very* fond of music."

Mr. Denzil said nothing, but his lips twitched a little, as though some amusing thought were passing through his brain, and then he sat down to listen to Barbara, who had no alternative but to go on playing.

Mr. Denzil chose his position with care: at some little distance from her, from whence he could fasten his eyes on the delicate profile turned towards him, taking in every detail of the same, every light and shade in the pretty brown hair, each graceful movement of the well-shaped hand and arm.

Barbara played on, oblivious of him and of everything else—as she always was when she once began to play—too absorbed in her occupation to have eyes and ears for aught else, until she was roused by noisy clapping proceeding from behind her, to find Mr. Richmond and Minnie Denzil standing near her, they having entered the room by the door instead of the window.

Oliver Denzil frowned slightly at the interruption, but Richmond only smiled; it was one of his peculiarities; he was always smiling. Perhaps it was his happy, contented disposition that made him so supremely pleased with himself and his surroundings; perhaps it was that the world looked so kindly on him; from whatever cause it proceeded, his brightness went far to make him the favourite he was.

"Brava!" he cried; "Brava! Miss Merivale—for you are Miss Merivale, I am sure. My dear Lady Denzil, what a treat you have been enjoying!"

"Indeed I have, Val; and I have been longing for you all the time; and now let me introduce you and Minnie properly. Miss Merivale—Mr. Richmond, Miss Denzil."

Barbara, overcome with confusion and shyness, remained dumb, extending only a hand, but there was not likely to be any long silence when Valentine Richmond was present.

"We ought to be friends, Miss Merivale," he said, in his ringing, genial voice, "for I know lots of your people—your uncle in the Foreign Office, and the other one in the Guards—in fact, I know them all."

"Do you?" said Barbara, her eyes sparkling with delight, "do you, really?"

"Yes, really and truly; indeed, Bobby Grey is a great pal of mine."

"And do you know Grannie—my grandmother," she corrected herself: "old Mrs. Grey who lives in Eaton Square?"

"Yes, I have been introduced to her, but that is all. What a pretty old lady she is, and as charming as she is pretty."

"Yes, isn't she?" she answered, her face so radiant that Oliver Denzil could not help wishing that he too had had the good fortune to know old Mrs. Grey.

"Who don't you know, Val?" interposed Minnie Denzil. "It seems to me, Miss Merivale, that your London must be a smallish kind of place after all, in spite of appearances, as our cousin seems to know everyone in it."

"That is rather a sweeping statement, Minnie," protested Richmond, with an affectation of modesty; "but really, you see, when a man has been knocking about London ever since he was a boy, he does get a general acquaintance, and a knowledge of who most people worth knowing are," and with that he smiled complacently and settled himself carefully in the most comfortable chair he could find within reach of Barbara, motioning to Miss Denzil to take the vacant one next to him. He looked radiantly handsome in the sunlight that was streaming through the window, all the more so that Oliver Denzil was seated at his elbow, his plain rugged features acting as a foil to Richmond's Apollo-like style of beauty.

"Val, do fetch your 'cello," asked Lady Denzil. "It would be so nice if you and Miss Merivale were to play some duets together; and Minnie could accompany you. Now, wouldn't it be charming?"

"Very, I think," said Richmond, nothing loth to obey; "only I don't know, Miss Merivale, what you will say to my performances."

"I am sure I shall like them very much," said Barbara shyly. "I expect you play a great deal better than I do;" and, indeed, she thought so: it seemed to her that Richmond must possess every virtue and every talent under the sun.

"No, no," he said, smiling deprecatingly; "but I hope we may be able to get on together. I flatter myself, at any rate, that I am not desperately bad." With that, he rose to fetch his instrument; and whilst tea was being discussed, music was turned over, duets and trios hunted out, and preparations made for what Lord Denzil, who looked in for a moment, suggested would be the veriest Pandemonium.

"You had better come with me, Oliver," he said to his son. "It is all very well for your mother, who does not really know one note of music from another, or she could never tolerate Richmond's false ones; but you have got ears, and I have something better for you to do than to sit here and have them excruciated—I really want you," he added.

Oliver rose with reluctance. "Is it pressing?" he asked.

"Yes, it is," replied his father, with a slight look of astonishment. It was a novelty to him to find Oliver unwilling for work. Mr. Denzil made no further objection.

"I am going out with my father, Miss Merivale," he said, approaching Barbara, "and I may not see you again before I leave; good-bye, and thank you so much for your music."

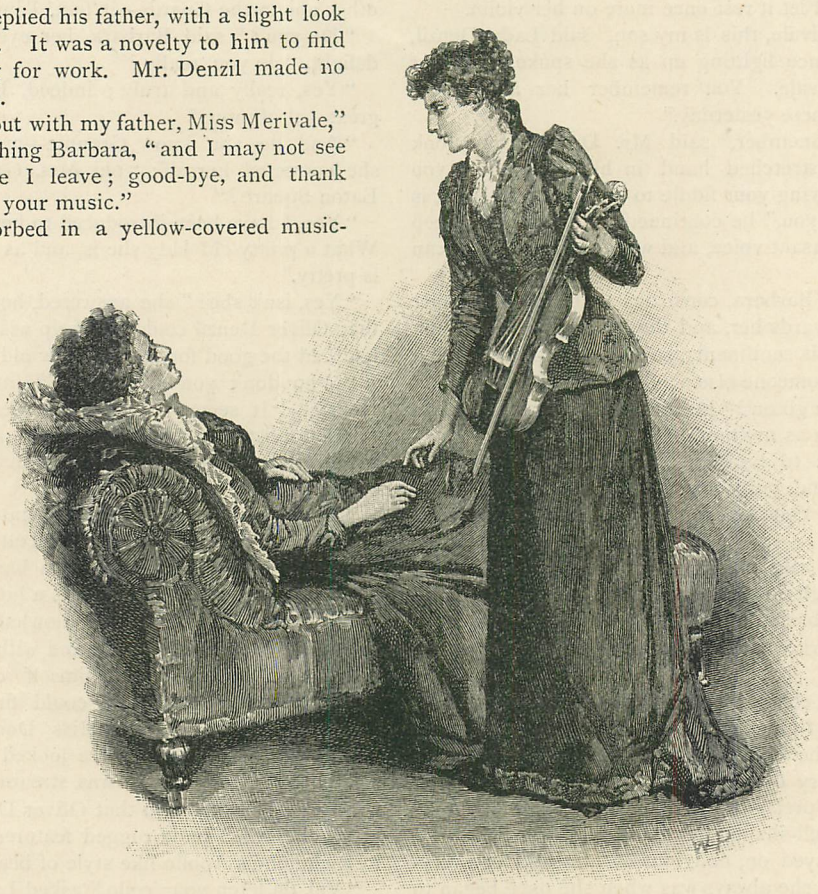
Barbara, absorbed in a yellow-covered music-book, gave him her hand without looking at him, and, with something approaching to a sigh, Oliver took it, and walked out of the room without another word. At the door he turned back to see Richmond's and Barbara's heads in close contiguity to one another as they carefully scanned the same score, and, contrary to his wont, he shut the door behind him with needless vehemence.

Lord Denzil was right—he usually was, although he had a habit of stating his opinions in an unnecessarily aggressive form: the concert that ensued at Denzilstone did partake of one's ideas of Pandemonium. Valentine Richmond, absolutely satisfied with himself, and, to a certain degree, a showy performer on the 'cello, nevertheless played false notes, and recklessly ignored time with a smiling countenance; Minnie Denzil floundered after him on the piano; whilst Barbara, utterly unable to make head against the two, at length laid down her bow in despair, and burst out laughing.

"It is no use," she cried; "we are only murdering this lovely trio."

Minnie Denzil looked offended.

"Considering that we are all reading the music, Miss Merivale," she said coldly, "I think we got on capitally."



"WILLINGLY INDEED DID SHE PROMISE TO RETURN THE NEXT DAY" (*p.* 397).

"Ahem!" said Richmond. "I will not go quite so far as that, Minnie, but the fact is, Miss Merivale is too much for us. You are so terribly in earnest," he added, turning to Barbara.

"Am I?" she answered. "I didn't know I was, but I can't help it when I am playing Schubert."

"Poor old Schubert!" said Richmond. "We were a little hot upon him, weren't we?" And then they all laughed—much to Barbara's relief, who feared she had been rude to Miss Denzil; and Richmond picked up his banjo, on which he was in reality much more at home than on the 'cello, and they exchanged tragedy for comedy: that is, Schubert for a comic song.

Lady Denzil looked on, smiling. It was a great

noise, she thought, and a very poor exchange for Barbara's solos, still, it brought the young people together, and it was far better for her than sitting alone, whilst Minnie and Richmond wandered together. As to Barbara, she thought it simply enchanting: it reminded her of the old happy days at Grannie's, when she and her uncles and cousins used to have musical evenings together, only here there was an element of interest that she had not known in her schoolroom days in the fair *débonair* countenance that looked at her so kindly, that smiled so sweetly over false notes and wrong time, and was so different—so deliciously different—from those of the young men she had hitherto met at Centrewood. When at last she prepared to depart, it was in very truth that the conventional "I am so sorry to go" rose to her lips, and willingly indeed did she promise to return the next day.

"Come a little earlier to-morrow, my dear," said Lady Denzil, as she took Barbara's hand into her own thin one, "and then you will have time to read to me a little. I like your English accent; it is very pretty, I think. Minnie says it is mincing, but I do not think so."

"You stick to your Amurrican, Minnie," said Richmond: "it is very *chic* nowadays, and extremely popular with the English aristocracy."

Miss Denzil looked at him with somewhat heightened colour.

"You are always making fun of us," she said. "I don't like it, Val." Thereupon ensued a little by-play between the two, during which Barbara agreed to read to her hostess for a certain time every day, understanding by this arrangement that Lady Denzil had fallen into Mrs. Merivale's wishes, and feeling all the time a burning desire to ask her not to pay her one farthing for her services. The blush that overspread her face as they finally settled matters made her look prettier than ever, and it was no wonder that Richmond proposed that he and Miss Denzil should walk as far as the gates of the park with her.

"We shall enjoy the stroll back in the gloaming, shan't we, Min?" he asked his cousin in a low voice, which had the effect of dispelling the little cloud that had gathered on her brow at his previous proposition.

The walk to the Centrewood gate was a good mile and a half from the house, and occupied quite half an hour, which to Barbara seemed like five minutes. It was a perfect summer evening, serene, cloudless, a little saddening, as summer evenings always are. In the park the deer stood browsing in herds, the western sun fell in level rays that glanced on the grand old trees, or lost themselves in the bosom of the lake: all was still, quiet, solemn. Conscious of the influence he was exercising over his two companions, Richmond put forth all his fascinations, attuning them to the place and the hour, and adjusting them so evenly between the two girls that each was justified in taking them altogether to herself, so that when he bade adieu to Barbara at the gate, giving her soft fingers ever so small, yet ever so significant, a pressure, it was little wonder that she went home with the delicate colour glowing in her cheeks, and her pulses beating high. They fell, however, to a steadier beat as, a few yards from the gates, she encountered Mr. Denzil. He looked at first as though he did not intend to stop and speak, but changed his mind.

"Are you just come from up there?" he asked, pointing towards Denzilstone.

"Yes," she said. "I am disgracefully late, am I not? I must get home as fast as I can."

"May I see you to the Vicarage?"

Barbara almost laughed; she was but a few hundred yards from her destination.

"Oh yes," she answered; "it is very kind of you, but I am just there, and——"

"You would rather I did not detain you, isn't that it?" he asked kindly. "By the way, how did the concert go off?"

"Oh! it was great fun," she answered, her face brightening at the recollection; "but Lord Denzil was right: it *was* a Pandemonium."

"I did not know you had heard what he said."

"I just caught that word, and I kept on thinking of it all the time we were vainly trying to arrive at the same bar together. Now I really must go—good-bye."

"Good-bye," he said. "I too shall be late for dinner;" and taking her hand in his, he gave it a hearty manly shake, so exactly the opposite to Richmond's insinuating pressure, that had she been older and wiser, she might even in that small act have discovered the difference between the two men. As it was, she set off running home without giving him another thought, and quite unaware that he was standing in the road, gazing after her, with a troubled expression in his grave eyes. Still treading on air, she turned into the Vicarage, looking so happy and pretty that even Mrs. Merivale, surrounded by her olive-branches, laboriously preparing their lessons, with Baby Alice, fretful from uncut teeth, in her arms, and a basketful of stockings to darn, caught the infection of the bright face, and smiled at her.

"You seem to have enjoyed yourself, Barbara," she said.

"Oh yes, I have had such a good time," she answered. "Give me baby. I will take her with me whilst I undress, and then I will come down and tell you all about it. Come to me, darling," she continued, taking Alice in her arms. She was overflowing with the milk of human kindness.

Mrs. Merivale was delighted when she heard of the success of the day, and that Barbara was really launched as daily companion to Lady Denzil.

"You must go and tell your father," she said triumphantly.

Mr. Merivale was evidently pleased when he heard of the afternoon's work.

"It will certainly be a help, dear," he said, passing his hand over her pretty hair, so like Barbara Grey's. "You see, my child," he continued—"in fact, I ought to have told you of it before, only it seems hard to lay one's burdens on a young thing like you—but, Barbara,

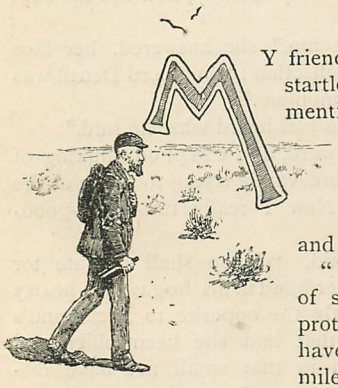
I am very poor, and if anything were to happen to me—and I am far from strong—I can't think what would become of your stepmother and those helpless children. You would have your mother's fortune—it is not much, but still sufficient for you—but it would be a mere pittance I could leave them; so you see, my darling, what a real help you are to me."

Barbara slipped her arm caressingly through his.

"Dearest father," she said, "do not talk like that. You are fairly well now, aren't you? and I promise you Mrs. Merivale and the children shall always be my first care. Meanwhile," with a little tender smile, "I am going to make my fortune at Denzilstone. Now I must tell you all I did there this afternoon, and how I enjoyed it;" and forthwith she launched into such an amusing description of her day's pleasure that Mr. Merivale forgot for the moment his cares and anxieties.

END OF CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

THROUGH AN EASTERN DESERT ON FOOT.



MY friends at Port Said were startled when I casually mentioned to them my idea of walking from that wicked little Franco-African city across the desert and up the coast to Jaffa.

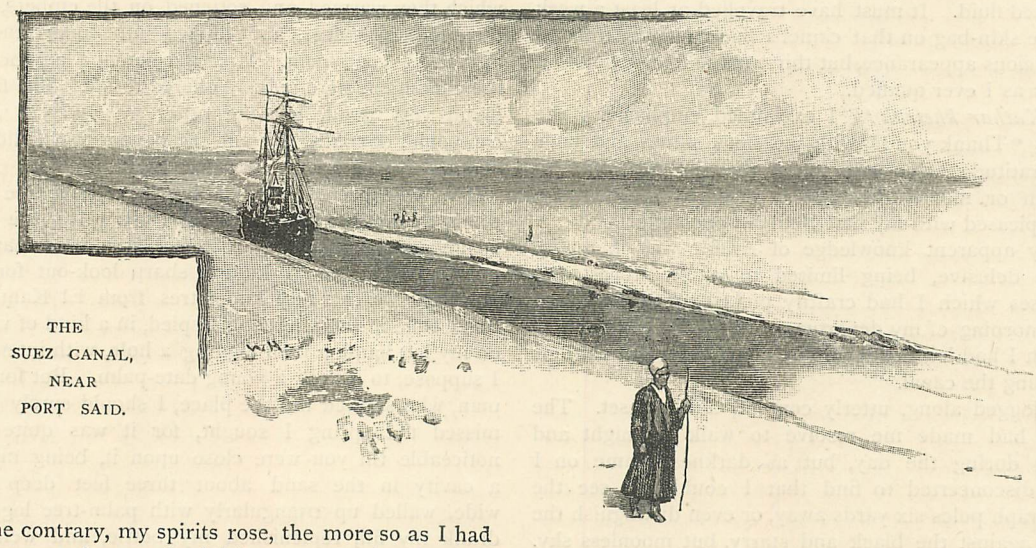
"You must not think of such a thing!" they protested. "You may have walked a thousand miles in England and America and Spain"—so I had—"but those are civilised and Christian countries, and this is neither. The Bedouins are utterly lawless, and you will run the gravest risk of being robbed and murdered, and horribly maltreated beside." The English clergyman assured me that if I persisted in going I must get a safeguard from the government and take a soldier along to read it to the Arabs! The director of the "Sailors' Rest," who had had one or two narrow escapes himself, solemnly declared that it was "tempting Providence" to go on foot, when, for a few francs, I could reach Jaffa with ease and safety by the steamer. And a good-natured American friend who had given me a letter to post for him at Jerusalem, hastened to relieve me of the custody of it when he found I intended travelling in such an unusual and dangerous way.

Now the fact was that I had left London on Boxing Day, 1890, spent my forty-fifth birthday in Liverpool, and, after a sojourn there of several pleasant weeks, had sailed away in the Anchor steamship *Armenia* to Port Said, for the express purpose of making a pedestrian journey, not merely to Jaffa and Jerusalem, but to Nazareth, Tiberias, the top of Mount Hermon, and across the Lebanon to Beyrout. All these prognostications of evil fell, therefore, upon deaf ears, except that I took especial pains to offer as little temptation as possible to robbers. Stout old walking shoes, a very plain and well-worn suit of blue cheviot and a little cap of the same, a small roll of thin magazines, and an old black mackintosh—no watch or jewellery, and no money—constituted an outfit but little likely, I thought, to excite even a Bedouin's cupidity. Moreover, certain traditions of the marvellous hospitality of the Arabs of the desert lingered in my mind, and I felt a comfortable conviction, alien in race, language, and religion though I was, that I should be treated with fraternal kindness.

The sun was blazing in a sky of cloudless blue on the morning of Saturday, February 7th, when I made my way out of Port Said, and bent my solitary steps southward along the west bank of De Lesseps' famous canal. The many and deep indentations of the sea render it impracticable to follow the coast, and I was compelled to make the first part of my journey in a direction that carried me forty-four kilometres away from my destination. I spent two days traversing these nine monotonous leagues, not wishing to fatigue myself at the outset of an arduous and perilous undertaking.

On Monday morning, about seven o'clock, I reached the fourth *gare*, or station, on the canal, just as the station master's boat was about to cross. Room was quickly and politely made for the unexpected passenger, and in a few minutes I sprang ashore on the verge of an immense waste of yellow-grey sand, barren, desolate, pathless, almost uninhabited. A few dozens of rude little houses, clustered on the east bank of the canal, made up the Arab village of El Kantara, the starting point of my desert pilgrimage, which was to end a hundred miles or more away to the eastward at El Arish, the south-west frontier town of Palestine.

Some of my companions in the boat spoke French, and I was rejoiced to learn from them that the telegraph line ran straight across the desert to El Arish, and I could not lose myself if I kept that in sight. Water, I was also told, could be had at a distance of fifty kilometres—not a very encouraging prospect. In fact, the expression of doubt and astonishment which overspread their faces when I declared my pedestrian intentions was far from re-assuring. The director of the "Sailors' Rest" at Port Said confessed to me afterwards at Jerusalem, that he fully expected my resolution would fail when I came face to face with the desert, and that I should creep meekly back, content to go to Jaffa by water, as others do. Not a bit of it!



THE SUEZ CANAL, NEAR PORT SAID.

On the contrary, my spirits rose, the more so as I had an unexpected cause for jubilation. Fearing I might have to hire a boat expressly to cross the canal, I had brought along five pence for ferriage. This munificent sum I now devoted to the commissary department, and procured from the village baker five round fresh loaves of Arab bread, about seven inches across and one inch thick, and likewise the half of a stale one which the worthy man added out of pure generosity. Coming down the canal a benevolent Frenchman had enriched me with a wine-bottle ; the Kantara villagers quickly recognised the utility of this and hastened to fill it for me. Thus equipped, the loaves and the magazine roll slung in the mackintosh over my shoulder, the bottle gripped in my hand, I turned my back on civilisation and plunged gaily into the desert. My rapid and buoyant steps soon carried me out of sight of the hovels of Kantara, and in less than half an hour I was alone in a world of sand and sky.

A taste for botanising has beguiled many an hour of my long walks in divers countries, and I had wondered much whether I should discover flowers in the desert. To my surprise I found many. Hardy shrubs of several sorts and various little herbs were scattered sparsely about over the sand in every direction. Although grass was quite wanting, a green oasis-like expanse, some acres in extent, wonderfully resembled a lawn when viewed at a distance, but, closely inspected, the vegetation proved to be a little succulent-leaved plant, wholly unlike grass. So curiously varied was the herbage that in one place I counted eight different species growing in the space of half a square foot. Little white cross-shaped flowers, on slender stems an inch or two high, spangled the sand here and there as thick as daisies in an English meadow. A small purple geranium, and a yellow blossom like a tiny dandelion were also plentiful. The only fragrant flowers grew in little lemon-coloured clusters on a straggling bush (*Thymelæa hirsuta*), whose slender grey branches were closely thatched at the ends with minute, thick, heart-shaped leaves, lined inside with white wool. The oddest of all the desert plants is the "pin-cushion wafer" (*Neurada procumbens*). This is a roughish creeping herb, producing a flat, thin, circular, grey fruit, about half an inch across, perfectly smooth below and thickly studded above with numerous short pin-points. This lies in wait on the sand, sticks to the first padded camel's hoof that descends upon it, and is carried for miles, perhaps, before it is detached. I tried walking barefoot occasionally, by way of a change, and many a time I lifted my heel very precipitately to brush off a "wafer" that had mistaken me for a camel. All this various vegetation, be it noticed, grew in the loose dry sand, watered only by the drenching dews.

Of course, all these botanical observations were not made the first day. In truth, my attention was presently diverted by an unpleasant discovery. I found that a wine-bottle was not at all an ideal canteen for desert use, and long before noon-day I had swallowed the last drop of the water it contained, less from thirst than to prevent its becoming too unpalatably warm. The sun poured down his dazzling rays with such intensity that I was glad to walk but slowly and to rest often in the shade of some sheltering bush. About the middle of the afternoon I spied camels and men coming in the distance, a little to the right of my line of march. One of the latter turned aside and sauntered towards me as I drew near the party. Thinking valour the better part of discretion I turned and sauntered towards *him*. We met—we scanned each other inquiringly from head to foot. Then he extended his hand and articulated the one word:

"*Backsheesh !*"

"*La, la, mah fish fluss !*" said I. ("No, no, I have no money !") Then I held up my empty bottle, and said in turn : "*Moyeh ?*" ("Water ?")

He looked decidedly astonished, then amused, and then he took the bottle, led the way to one of the

camels, and poured me out a scanty pint of the coveted fluid. It must have travelled at least a week in the skin-bag on that camel's back, judging from its suspicious appearance, but thirst made it as delicious a drink as I ever quaffed.

"*Kathar kheirak!*" I exclaimed, emphasising the Arab "Thank you!" with judicious smiles and nods of gratitude. No one made the slightest offer to detain or molest me, and I resumed my journey, well pleased with my first Bedouin encounter.

My apparent knowledge of Arabic was in reality quite delusive, being limited to a few words and phrases which I had craftily picked up at Port Said the morning of my departure, and the "Thank you!" which I had learned from one of my boat companions crossing the canal.

I jogged along, utterly content, until sunset. The heat had made me resolve to walk by night and sleep during the day, but as darkness came on I was disconcerted to find that I could not see the telegraph poles six yards away, or even distinguish the wire against the black and starry, but moonless sky. So, without more ado, I stretched myself on the sand, spread the mackintosh over me, and in a few minutes was sound asleep. Sand is a soft bed to lie down upon, but it gets amazingly hard after a while, and with the first blush of dawn I was up and away to meet the sun. About seven o'clock I came suddenly upon three Arabs sitting about a little fire made of the desert bushes, most of which burn freely. They gave me water at the sound of the talismanic "Moyeh," and hospitably motioned to me to sit down. The early morning was chill and damp with dew, and I was well pleased to warm myself. My hosts were just beginning their breakfast of thin, dry cakes, which they warmed and softened on the embers, and then tore in pieces, and dipped into some kind of appetising condiment. Half a cake and a pinch of the condiment were politely offered to me. The first I found very good, but the other was such a fiery compound of coarse salt and red pepper that I did not venture upon it for fear of future thirst.

This unexpected wayside breakfast gave me new courage, and I pushed on briskly. As the day advanced, the aqueous problem began to demand a fresh solution, and I kept a sharp look-out for the promised water "fifty kilometres from El Kantara." Some time in the afternoon I spied, in a kind of valley on my left hand, a man digging a hole, with intent, as I suppose, to set out a young date-palm. But for this man, who showed me the place, I should surely have missed the spring I sought, for it was quite unnoticeable till you were close upon it, being merely a cavity in the sand about three feet deep and wide, walled up triangularly with palm-tree logs. I drank my fill, replenished my bottle, and went on rejoicing. By sunset, however, it was empty again. So was my larder, the last of my loaves having been duly munched out of existence, and I lay down that night on the sand in a palm-grove without food, water, or money, and yet slept as tranquilly as ever I did.

The next morning life had a special interest for me. Breakfast was a mystery, and as I trudged along I was naturally curious about its unravelment. By and by I felt an unaccountable impulse to sit down, though it was still early, and I was not at all fatigued. Down I sat on the instant, and fell to studying a bush. Suddenly I heard a faint far-away voice—the unmistakable cry of a goat. The crunching of my shoes on the sand drowned all slight noises, and if I had not been sitting perfectly silent I should not have heard this auspicious sound. Without delay I marched towards it till a frisking flock and a young crook-bearing shepherd came in sight. The youth directed me to an enclosure of date-palm leaves, within which was a good-natured Arab woman, who gave me to drink, but never mentioned breakfast! However, I was not really hungry yet, so I thanked her heartily for the water and travelled on. An hour or so later I came upon a man digging up bushes with a clumsy hoe, perhaps for fuel. Following his signs, I found another palm-leaf enclosure, containing a woman, some children, and three or four men sitting placidly about a little blaze. Producing from my pocket a bright red cotton handkerchief, I soon made the woman understand, by dint of pantomime,

"'BACKSHEESH!'" (*p.* 399).

that I would like to exchange it for something to eat. She was in no way averse to the proposed barter, and offered me in turn a great handful of brown, sugary, delicious dates. I took them straightway, charmed with my bargain, bowed myself out, and under the next convenient bush I enjoyed a feast rather than a breakfast.

Twice or thrice more during the day I obtained water at similar palm-leaf houses, mere roofless fences against the wind, but quite sufficient in that hot Egyptian climate. The last of the dates made a toothsome supper, and I slept in peace for the third time on the sand. For the sake of warmth, I edged myself under a heap of dry palm leaves, and I can unreservedly testify that they were the prickliest bed-clothes I ever slept under.

The next forenoon was singularly eventless. About mid-day I became so engrossed in botanising that I moved about on all fours spying among the tiny herbs. Rising to my feet at last, I was astonished to find a spectator of my rather undignified proceedings. Evidently an Arab, about fifty years old, blue-eyed, sun-tanned, with a short, full beard, and a serious, but not unkindly, countenance; clothed in dingy white robes, with a cloth of the same colour wound turbanwise about his head, a torn square of coarse sack-cloth in lieu of a cloak, a small blue bag slung by a cord over his shoulder, and a stout stick in his hand, the stranger was a quaint, as well as mysterious, figure. He was following the telegraph line like myself, and after a brief mutual reconnaissance, which satisfied each that the other was harmless, we started on in single file, I at a respectful distance behind, but resolved to keep him in sight till he found water. For a long time he seemed wholly indifferent to such trivial things as thirst and hunger; but finally, as the sun was on the point of setting, he began to shade his eyes with his hand, and look in various directions as if seeking something. At last he seemed to see what he wanted, and, beckoning me to follow, started briskly off. Follow I did, and he conducted me straight to a long-sworded, handsome young shepherd, who guided us in turn into a camp, where we had a fire to ourselves, and a venerable Bedouin brought us a wheat cake and a little wooden trough of milk. This was scant fare for two such famished individuals as we were, and when it was gone, my companion opened his blue bag, and gave me a generous handful of crumbs—thin bread-chips — dry, but most delicious to a hungry man! He took the same himself, and when we had finished our frugal repast we composed ourselves to sleep. A long line of silent-footed camels came filing past us through the darkness into camp; a new moon hung its silver horn in the evening sky; sounds of laughter and singing came from the black hair-cloth tent near us; my strange and picturesque surroundings filled me with a sense of curious delight as I slowly sank into unconsciousness.

"WHICH HE KEPT IN A HOLE IN THE GROUND" (*p.* 402).

The next morning we were stirring betimes, and my new companion motioned me to follow, without a word of thanks or adieu to our not over-generous host. I thought this rather churlish, but I afterwards found that it was desert etiquette to steal away thus in silence. The remainder of the crumbs served us for breakfast, and then we marched contentedly along, as cheerful and care-free as two sparrows waiting to be divinely fed. I was, I may say, a truster in

Jehovah, and he was evidently a servant of Allah, for he had twice scrupulously washed his hands in the sand, faced towards Mecca, and said his prayers with all the devout bowings and prostrations of a faithful Moslem.

"My Arab," as I learned to call him, for we journeyed together to Jaffa like two brothers, had a desert-sharpened perception of water, and used now and then to thrust his stick deep into the sand, and if the end came up moist, he thereupon burrowed into the ground with his two hands with singular dexterity. Once he obtained good water in drinkable quantity in this odd fashion, and twice or thrice a brackish fluid unfit for use. Nevertheless, the setting sun found us thirsty and hungry, and Mahomed (for my new comrade had bethought himself by that time to tell me his name) searched vainly a long time for another Bedouin camp. At last we found one, officered by a virago of alarming volubility. Soft answers quite failed to turn away her unaccountable wrath; and finally Mahomed calmly sat himself down under the edge of the tent, and so did I. A little later the goat-herd came home with his flock, and she spent her tongue upon him with equal shrewishness. He seemed to be quite unruffled thereby, however, and calmly occupied himself with feeding his young kids, which he kept in a hole in the ground, packed together like sardines, and closely covered with a round wooden lid. This was a much humbler place than the camp of the night before; but in due time the virago brought us a generous bowl of milk, and as many round thick wheaten cakes as we could eat. I slept soundly after that, but my Moslem brother somehow reconciled it to his conscience to rise in the night, milk a goat, and insist on my partaking with him of the beverage thus surreptitiously obtained.

Next day we were off again before sunrise and soon came to another tent. Mahomed swung his stick at the dog, marched calmly up to the fire, ejaculated "*Salaam ahlaikum!*" ("Peace be with you!"), sat down on his heels before the blaze as composedly as possible, and motioned to me to do the same. This time our hosts were sociably inclined, and much Arabic chatter went on while the breakfast cake was baking in the ashes. When it was done, broken into bits in a bowl of milk, stirred up with a dexterous Bedouin forefinger, and set before us, Mahomed and I partook of it as gravely as if we were two sheikhs waited on by loyal tribesmen.

I hope my comrade thanked these good-natured people. At any rate, he tarried chatting for an hour or more, and then we started off again at a good pace to make up for lost time. During the day we passed two or three herds of camels, pasturing on the desert shrubs, and Mahomed evidently learned something from their keepers, for he pushed on till after dusk without stopping, till at last we came to a whole village of scattered tents. After some inquiries he got a boy to guide us, for it was now quite dark except for the faint light of the slender crescent moon, and presently we came upon a thick hedge-like wall of dry bushes with two short end walls, the three including an oblong space open towards the east. Within this rude enclosure, in an elongated ring about two brightly blazing fires, sat nearly twenty stalwart Bedouins. I confess I was startled for a moment at this unexpected array, realising, as I could not fail to do, how completely I was at their mercy. But it was too late to draw back, and I coolly followed my guide to a seat on my heels beside one of the fires. Gossip and jest and laughter were going round, in a way curiously suggestive of the company in an English tavern on a Saturday night. The beverage was not beer, however, but coffee, and soon two little cups came travelling along from hand to hand on a rude wooden tray, for the benefit of the new-comers. It was plain *café noir*, scarcely more than two mouthfuls in quantity, but nectar could not have been more welcome, especially as I took it as conclusive evidence of a friendly spirit on the part of my unknown and formidable hosts. I say "hosts" advisedly, for, before long, a handsome young Arab came marching up with a huge bowl on his head which he deposited on the ground. It was full to the brim of a thick, steaming hot porridge. Nine of the party quickly sat around it, plunged their fingers into the mass, and fed themselves in Nature's simple fashion with a skill quite astonishing to a man

"FED THEMSELVES IN NATURE'S SIMPLE FASHION."

accustomed to think spoons indispensable for such work. I was hospitably forced to make one of the nine, and found the porridge and the fragments of thin wheat-cake stirred up in it most satisfactory to a hungry person. One after another took his turn at the bowl until all were satisfied, and it was then borne away in a sadly depleted state.

After supper the Bedouins were all in high good humour, and Mahomed was called on to give an account of himself and his "*Howadja*." He told them the little he knew, and, apparently, a good deal that he guessed, and the "*Howadja*" himself, by dint of pantomime, diagrams on the sand, and his few words of Arabic, added what he could to the story. Then the two strangers were left in peace, and a one-stringed fiddle was plaintively twangled for a while by a desert minstrel. This musical after-piece concluded the evening, and the village fathers and sons departed to their families. The guests stretched themselves on the sand beside the fire, and slumbered peacefully till the morning light aroused them for their Sabbath day's journey to El Arish.

The distant roar of the sea, audible in the stillness of the night, had given warning that the coast was near. Nevertheless, a long and tedious forenoon's trudge lay before us, and it was nearly mid-day before we climbed the hill to the quaint old Arab town. Parched with thirst, I hastened to the well only to find that it was deep, and I had nothing wherewith to draw. The blue-robed women who came with huge jars upon their heads had a rope for their own use. One of them, perceiving my plight, graciously filled my bottle, and thereupon, having quenched our thirst, Mahomed and I delayed not to enter the town.

Strictly speaking, my desert pilgrimage ended at El Arish, and I have no space to tell how I was haled before the Turkish governor, and, being found without a passport, was condemned to go back whence I came; how I mustered all my French, persuaded him that the Ottoman Empire would suffer no harm from my invasion of it, and finally got leave to go on; how I sold at auction an alligator-leather purse for two Egyptian piastres (five farthings each), wherewith Mahomed and I bought a luxurious Sunday dinner of dates and figs, which we ate under a castor-oil tree; how we journeyed together for a week up the coast, and how he insisted on carrying me on his back across the first stream we reached; how he piloted me night and morning to Arab tents, wherein we enjoyed unfailing Moslem hospitality; how he tarried with me at the house of Rolla Floyd, the Jaffa dragoman, who discovered that he was a pilgrim returning to Bagdad from a five months' journey to Mecca; and how he got up at day-break the next morning and vanished without a word of farewell, after we had travelled fraternally together for ten halcyon days!

E. A. STERNS.

NAILING UP THE ROSE-TREE.

WHERE the rose-tree flaunted tall
On the southern garden wall
Of a mansion old and grey,
It fell out one summer's day,
Will and Bessie, strolling round
This domain of beauty, found
Some few branches, here and there,
Needed nailing up with care.

What avails the sweetest rhyme
To describe that golden time?
Or those roses, creamy, faint,
Red, and white, what words shall paint?
We, from summers past, may know
Something of the sunny glow
Smiling brightly round the pair
Busy with the branches there.

At the first glance, who would ask
Or desire a simpler task?
Yet, while light and shadow played,
Guessing from the time they stayed—
One long hour, in that one place—
It would seem to be the case
That a hundred branches there
Needing nailing up with care!

With his noisy hammer still,
Leaning from his ladder, Will
Gave the maid a rose whose hue
Pale beside her blushes grew!
Thus it chanced that happy day,
Where the rose-tree blossomed gay,
Love surprised the youthful pair
Busy with the branches there!

J. R. EASTWOOD.

DUET FOR SOPRANO AND BARITONE.

Words from SHAKSPEARE. *Music by* W. J. FOXELL, B.A., B.Mus. (Lond.).

SOPRANO.

BARITONE.

PIANO.

p *f* *p*

1. It was a
3. This ca - rol

lov - er and his lass,
they be - gan that hour,
With a hey and a ho, and a hey non - i - no,

1. That thro' the
3. How that a

With a hey and a ho, and a hey non - i - no,

f *poco rit.* *p a tempo.*

green corn - field did pass / life was but a flow'r } In the spring - time, the on - ly pret - ty ring - time, When

a tempo. *colla voce.* *p*

cres - - - - cen - - - - do. *ff*

birds do sing, hey ding a ding a ding, ding a ding a ding;..... Sweet

p cres - - - cen - - - do. *ff*

When birds do sing, hey ding a ding a ding, ding a ding a ding; Sweet

tr

cres - - - cen - - - do. *f*

f

lov - ers love the spring, Sweet lov - ers love the spring.

f

lov - ers love the spring,..... Sweet lov - ers love the spring.

f *f*

With a hey and a

2. Be-tween the a - cres of the rye, / 4. And therefore take the pre - sent time, } With a hey and a

p

ho, and a hey non - i - no.

ho, and a hey non - i - no, 2. These pret - ty coun - try folks would lie / 4. For love is crown - ed with the prime } In the spring -

p a tempo. *cres - - - - cen - - - - do.*

When birds do sing, hey ding a ding a ding,

a tempo. *p cres - - - - cen - - - - do.*

- time, the on - ly pret - ty ring - time When birds do sing, hey ding a ding a

colla voce. *a tempo.* *cres - - - - cen - - - - do.*

ding a ding a ding;..... Sweet lov - ers love the spring, Sweet

ding, ding a ding a ding; Sweet lov - ers love the spring,..... Sweet

1st time. *Last time.*

lov - ers love the spring. spring.

lov - ers love the spring. spring.

THE MYSTERY OF THE AURORA.

BY J. MUNRO, AUTHOR OF "HEROES OF THE TELEGRAPH."

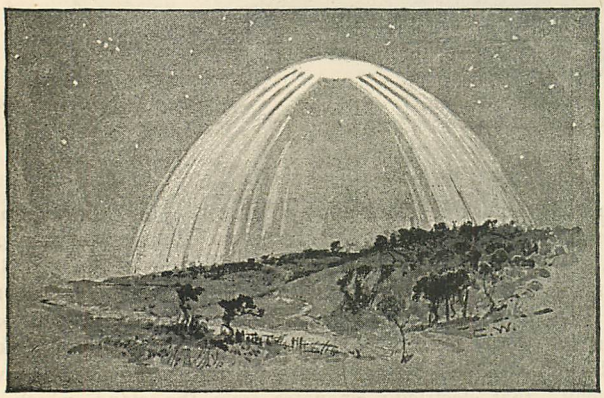
THE BOW AURORA.

THE Aurora, or Polar Light, is by far the most sublime and beautiful of all the celestial shows; but although it has fascinated the world for ages, and been the subject of innumerable observations and experiments by accomplished men of science, its nature and origin is to this day a mystery. As we are now approaching one of the regular periods of maximum display, it may be well to review the sum and substance of our present knowledge of this phenomenon. In recent years quite a large number of references to the Aurora have been disinterred from the pages of ancient chronicles and other books, for instance, the Annals of Ireland, the History of Josephus, and the works of Tacitus, Pliny, and Aristotle. The mystic lights in the skies, often blood-red in colour, and the raging fiery forms were regarded in those early days as the apparition of some god, or the warring hosts of heaven, and taken as a divine portent of some calamity about to happen on earth. To this day in England a red Aurora is often mistaken for a distant conflagration. One seen during the winter of 1870-1 was supposed by the country people to be the reflection of Paris in flames. The Orcadians call the Northern Lights "The Merry Dancers;" and certainly the more active streaming Auroras give the impression of dancing lights: but the term probably comes from the old idea, still common to the Eskimo and Indians of North America, that the auroral streamers are the spirits of the dead visiting each other, and feasting in the land of the Hereafter.

The typical form of the Aurora, whether seen in the northern or southern hemisphere, is an arch of light spanning the sky in the vicinity of the magnetic north, that is to say, the direction towards which the needle of the compass points. The arch is often of white, pale yellow, or loveliest of all, of rainbow colours. Under the bow is seen a dark segment of sky between it and the horizon. Sometimes the brighter stars are visible through this blackness, which may either be caused by contrast with the brightness of the arch, or due to a film of vapour. Sometimes the segment is apparently filled up by a rugged cloud like the nimbus of a thunderstorm, and there is reason to believe that electricity emanates from the cloud, which is frequently agitated and torn along its upper edge. Rays or streamers of light are seen to shoot from the bow into the sky towards a point nearly overhead, or more correctly, towards the "magnetic zenith," or zenith of the compass needle. These streamers are often of white, green, yellow, or red, and occasionally of blue or grey. In fact they assume all the colours of the rainbow, and sometimes change from one hue to another in the course of their passage. In the finer displays, they are observed to cover the whole sky without hiding the stars, and to converge to an irregular oval space nearly overhead, which is called the "corona." A shimmering or tremulous movement passes rapidly through the streamers, producing the

THE ARCH AURORA.

effect of a luminous drapery undulating in the breeze. By and by, the bow in the north begins to rise in the sky and move towards the zenith, where it generally breaks up and disappears. Other bows are sometimes formed below it, or across it, and even alongside of it, till as many as nine have been counted. Now and again the arch is not completed, but takes the appearance of a long band or ribbon of light ; and one was seen in Alaska by Mr. Frederick Whymper, the artist, which resembled the folds of a gigantic snake twining in the northern sky with its head in the air, and its body emitting flashes of prismatic light, through which the stars of the Arctic night were gleaming brightly. Rare and beautiful as this ser-



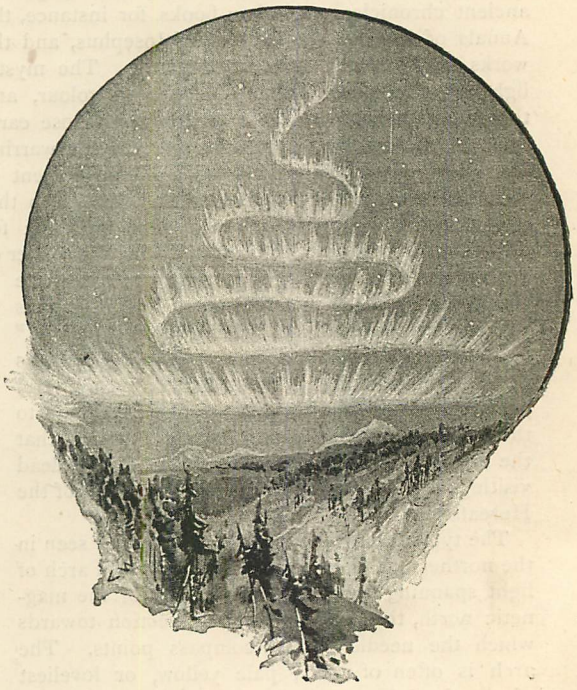
CORONA AURORA.

pentine Aurora must be, it is not so lovely as the "Curtain Aurora," which, in its commoner aspect, may be compared to a fringe or valance of coloured streamers hanging in the sky. The folds of the ethereal drapery are similar to those of a mantle, and the tremulous motion, the changing colours through which the stars are visible, put one in mind of some diaphanous veil of Oriental silk. When the Curtain Aurora is seen in its perfection, the streamers cover the whole sky, and meet in the open crown overhead, like the walls of a vast tent, embroidered with gold, and jewelled with rubies, sapphires, and emeralds. This is the grandest form of all—the *Aurora Superba.* It is sometimes seen in Eastern Siberia, and even in our own latitudes.

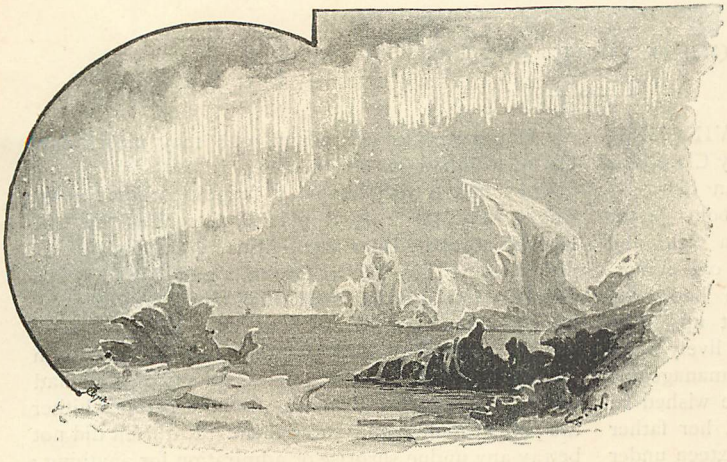
A great deal of evidence for and against the popular notion that hissing, rustling, or crackling noises are heard during an Aurora has been collected in the last few years ; and in our opinion it tends to prove that such noises are really heard, but only at times, when the Aurora is probably not very high, the streamers are very energetic, and the atmosphere in a favourable condition for conveying the sounds. There are cases on record in which the noise has been the first intimation of the auroral display. Miss Kemble was led to witness an Aurora while staying at Edinburgh, by the peculiar sound attracting her attention ; and a Scotch meteorologist in the lighthouse of Sumburgh Head could tell when there was an Aurora by the same warning. The smell of "sulphur" which is reported of Auroras, as of lightning, is more dubious, but it is not improbable that the ozone and other gases formed by the electric discharge in the atmosphere may sometimes become sensible in displays near the ground.

At first it was thought that the Aurora always took place in the higher regions of the atmosphere, but it is now a well-established fact that Auroras are sometimes observed quite close to the earth. They appear to occur at all heights up to a hundred miles or more ; and Professor Lemström, a Finnish meteorologist, has produced the auroral light artificially from a network of copper wires armed with points, and supported on poles on the summit of a hill in Finmark. The wire was connected to the ground, and an auroral arch was seen to form above it.

Although the Aurora is called the Polar Light, it is not so often seen in the Polar regions as further south. The zone of its maximum frequency and finest display runs round the northern hemisphere, and perhaps also the southern, about the 60th parallel of latitude, or the geographical limit of trees. Hudson Bay, Northern Siberia, the Faroe Islands, and the northern parts of Norway fall within this belt, and the displays at Tromsö are generally so fine that excursion trains are now run to allow strangers to see them. Above this zone the Auroras are commonly observed in the south, and below it—for example, in the United Kingdom—they are usually seen towards the north ; Orkney and Shetland are in or near the zone of maximum display, and the Auroras



SERPENTINE AURORA.



CURTAIN AURORA.

there are sometimes very grand. They help to relieve the monotony of the long winter nights, and they are occasionally so bright that small print can be read by their light.

In Lapland, Herr Carl Boch, an artist, painted one of the pale yellow bows so common in that country by its own light. Singular to say, however, the weird illumination of the Aurora, although it often casts a strong shadow, similar to that of moonlight, hardly ever affects the most sensitive photographic plates. After many trials one very feeble photograph was obtained by a Scandinavian observer, but the luminosity was just noticeable. The spectroscope shows the light to consist of a pale yellow or citron band as the characteristic line, with sometimes a red band, and more rarely blue and other lines. These bands, however, do not rigorously correspond to the apparent colour of the light as seen by the naked eye. For instance, a red glow does not always yield a red band in the spectroscope.

It is remarkable, and so far inexplicable, that the spectrum of the Aurora cannot be identified with any other known spectrum. The old theory to the effect that the Aurora was simply a discharge of electricity in the upper regions of the air, and similar to the varied glows of the Geissler vacuum tubes when traversed by the electric discharge from an induction coil, is found to be deficient, since it has been ascertained that none of the gases known to make up our atmosphere yield the spectrum of the Aurora when electricity is passed through them. We do not get the citron and red lines of the Aurora from the spectrum of these or any other gases hitherto tried in the Geissler tube. It has been supposed that particles of meteoric dust in the higher air might give rise to these characteristic lines, but recent experiments by Professors Dewar and Liveing have proved that the dust of meteoric minerals floating in the atmosphere does not produce these lines. What, then, is the secret of the Aurora? It is clearly an electrical phenomenon. The magnetic needle is disturbed during the display, especially if it be a brisk one with violent streamers; the telegraph lines are rendered unworkable by the strong "earth" or induced currents in them. Telegraph instruments are sometimes actually fused, signal bells rung on railways, and even an electric lamp has been kept lighted by these vagrant and irresponsible currents. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that the period of maximum display of the Aurora recurs every eleven or twelve years, and coincides with the observed maximum period of spots on the sun's disc, and of magnetic storms or perturbations in the earth's magnetism. The Aurora, the magnetic storm, and the hurricanes of the solar atmosphere are, therefore, associated in some mysterious manner. The years 1870 to 1872, for example, were distinguished by fine Auroras, magnetic disturbances, earth currents, and solar spots. So again were the years 1881 to 1884; and it is expected that 1892 to 1895 will witness a recurrence of these phenomena. There is evidently a connecting medium between the atmosphere of the sun and the atmosphere of the earth. An electrician would call it an "electric medium," and pronounce it to be the "luminiferous ether."

Be this as it may, there are some Auroras which appear to be quite local, both in their origin and their effects, and there is reason to believe that in such cases the electricity is developed by meteorological changes; for example, the evaporation of water and the commingling of warm and moist with cold and dry air.

In short, we must regard the Aurora as an effect of electrical discharges in the air, but the precise nature of these discharges, the origin of the electricity itself, and the conditions which determine the display are still to seek.

AN AURORA BROKEN UP BY STORMS.

A GOOD DEAL ABROAD.

ISS KATHLEEN VINCENT, of Killaloe, County Clare, was an orphan and an heiress—that is, she had about £1,500 a year in her own right, and inherited also the old manor-house where she had been born and brought up. She was a very pretty, lively Irish girl, with dark brown eyes and wavy unmanageable brown hair that never would stay as she wished it. Her mother she had lost in infancy, and her father had lately died, leaving his daughter at sixteen under the guardianship of her maternal uncle, Mr. Joseph Porter.

The first step the old gentleman took with his newly-acquired charge was to send her for a year or two to what he called a "first-rate finishing-school" near London. And here, at Miss Peard's very select establishment at Surbiton, Kathleen found many kindred spirits. To girls of her type, a boarding-school is apt to prove a very hot-bed of foolishness. Kathleen Vincent, who had been sent to the select establishment a fresh, hungry, bouncing country girl, left it very vain, rather sentimental, with an album of "confessions," a small appetite, a great regard for her own person, and an insurmountable determination to look at life through the medium of the sensational novel.

"My dear child," Kathleen's uncle said to her as they sat at breakfast in his house in Portman Square the first morning after her arrival from school, "I've a little treat in store for you and Lizzie" (Lizzie was his daughter, a rosy-cheeked damsel of fifteen). "What do you say to a trip abroad? The House will be up next week, and I think I can manage to take you for a little run to Switzerland."

Mr. Joseph Porter, who was a wealthy manufacturer, was bent on discharging his duties as regarded his ward.

"Oh papa, how delightful!" cried Lizzie. The girls were in raptures. Papa cut them short; he had an important appointment coming off in five minutes.

"There's just a week for you to get ready in," he observed as he left the table. "Ten o'clock train punctually on Friday morning—mind, girls, ten *sharp!*"

And in a week they started. We will not descant on the amount of luggage considered necessary for a few weeks' tour by the young ladies; poor Uncle Joseph remonstrated in vain, and at last even Lizzie said, "Don't you think you could do without *quite* so many evening-dresses, Cathy dear?"

To which her cousin replied gravely, "One must always be ready for emergencies."

"Papa says you might as well dress for the benefit of the Tockahoopoo Indians," said Lizzie.

"One never knows whom one may meet," said Cathy, who had the last word.

They had a very happy, if fatiguing, three weeks. They "did" the usual places patronised by the English abroad—Interlaken, Mürren, Lucerne—every place where the tennis-ground and the English chaplain proclaim that the British tourist has marked it for his own.

They climbed up the Righi, they stayed at the Kulm Hotel; they duly invested in alpen-stocks, and had them marked with the names of all the places whither the patient mule could carry them. Kathleen did not betray any undue surprise or admiration for anything; but then—who knows?—perhaps it would not have been considered "the thing" among the damsels of her "set."

"It's all very well," she said to Lizzie, "but we have had no real 'adventures' yet!"

It was still early in August, and there were three weeks yet to spare before they were due at home; so Mr. Porter suggested that they should break the return journey by staying in the Black Forest, at a quiet picturesque little spot known to him in his bachelor days, and as yet, he fondly hoped, beyond the ken of the all-pervading tourist. Nothing particular occurred on the way thither, except that the travellers suffered much from the heat, and, what was worse, found the train terribly crowded.

Presently, just as the train was starting, a young Englishman jumped in.

"Hurry up, John," he cried to his valet, who was tearing breathlessly after him.

The young man took his seat opposite Kathleen and next to an old German lady. Cathy stole a glance a him presently, from over the top of the novel she was reading. He was tall and slender, with dark eyes.

"Quite distinguished-looking," she thought to herself, "and he has a Roman nose. I wonder how he got that curious scar over one eye;" and then it occurred to her that to stare at a new-comer was not at all the sort of thing that the heroine of a novel would do; so she bent her head again over her book. Then she gave a little involuntary gasp from the heat, which the stranger instantly noticed, and let down the window, smiling as he said—

"One is never allowed any air in this country! Are you travelling far?"

Miss Vincent replied that they were going to spend a few weeks at Imlen, in the Black Forest.

"Ah! the Black Forest—how delightful! I wish I were going there too," the youth returned. "I am obliged to go straight through to London;" and he sighed.

Kathleen felt quite sorry for this. She wondered to what rank the stranger belonged. He must surely be a lord or a duke at least. Cathy hadn't much experience of dukes, but she vaguely thought that they

travelled about with valets, and had pleasant eyes and nice smiles, like this young gentleman. And he had such good manners, too! for presently he turned to the old German lady, and talked fluently to her in German, while Kathleen wondered at his proficiency in that language. Then the old lady wanted her silver-mounted bag, and he got up quietly with an *Erlauben sie mir*, holding it while she unlocked it and extracted therefrom two enormous greasy ham sandwiches for herself and her maid, and a small white parcel of something else.

"I change carriages here," he said, as the train drew up, looking round for his valet as he spoke. "*Bon voyage!*" and he was gone.

"I wonder who that man is," remarked Lizzie, looking after him. "Didn't he look a swell, papa?" giving Mr. Porter a little poke.

"Eh? what, my dear?" said the old gentleman, waking up from a nap, and trying to look as if he hadn't been asleep.

They, too, got out at the next station, and after a long succeeding drive found themselves in the wonderful country of pines; and, taking the journey in a leisurely fashion, the next day saw them safely landed in the little hamlet of Imlen, where the few small houses with their church-spire stood picturesquely on the brow of the hill surrounded by wooded slopes of every shade of green.

"What a romantic spot!" Cathy cried, as the rickety old *einspänner* rattled over the stones of the village street. "But where are we going to stay, Uncle Joseph? I don't see any hotel."

"*There*," said Uncle Joseph, pointing to an old ivy-covered tower rising over a near hill. "It's quite a unique place—old convent; monks fled there when in danger, and built themselves a hiding-place."

The girls opened their eyes still wider. Here was indeed a new experience. Thousands of possibilities and entrancing situations crowded themselves into Kathleen's mind. The tower rose taller above them, and now stone walls, with low red-tiled roofs, disclosed themselves; and when the carriage rolled beneath an old portcullis archway cut in the wall, the delusion was complete. They certainly must be back in the Middle Ages.

But in the doorway stood the smiling, clean landlady, welcoming Mr. Porter quite as an old friend, while the rosy waiting-maid took charge of the two girls and escorted them to their rooms.

It was an old monastery of the fourteenth century, now turned into an hostelry. A picturesque, curious old building of the most ramshackle description, with ivy-grown walls, paved courtyards, and many winding staircases. It had evidently been added to at different periods, and the result was such that you couldn't tell whether it was Gothic, Byzantine, or Norman, but it reminded you faintly of all three.

"How very exciting all this is! It is so interesting to feel like someone in a story," Kathleen cried, enthusiastically, as she and Lizzie took possession of their quaint, little, low-roofed room.

"*I* think it is a great deal more interesting to be one's self," said Lizzie the practical. "There are some old ladies sitting in the courtyard, knitting," she went on, looking out of the small mullioned window; "they look like Germans—and oh, I *do* believe that one of them is our friend of the train."

So, indeed, it proved; and when they went down, she accosted them with great volubility.

"Ach! meine Damen," she said, "I must meeself present to you. I am zee Frau Baronin von Freigut, and zis is vere I mostly come for ze zommer. Ach! and I haf choost come—I haf been tiefed yesterday from a wicked man who carry my bag at ze station; he robbed me of my papers—ten banknotes—hundert marks each. Ach! and I make a scene—I tell the station-master—he tink he will catch ze tief."

It was all rather difficult to follow, as the Frau Baronin's excitement made her English more unintelligible even than usual, but the girls gathered that the poor lady had good grounds for suspecting the thief to have been the dark silent Italian, who, Kathleen remembered, had crouched up sleepily in a corner of the carriage, his hat over his eyes, and who had afterwards, it seemed, volunteered to carry the precious bag at the station where the lady alighted. "I had forgot to lock it again," she said piteously. By the time the theft was discovered by the maid, the Italian had of course disappeared; but the alarm was given, and all the necessary inquiries set on foot. For the rest, the Baroness seemed rich enough to get over even the loss of a thousand marks—so Kathleen consoled herself by reflecting.

All around and above the old convent the lovely pine-shaded woods stretched for miles away, and here Cathy and Lizzie wandered to their hearts' content. But on the second day after their arrival, as they returned from a long expedition in the forest, their hands laden with spoils, another surprise awaited them.

"Did you see that man lounging in the yard below?" Kathleen inquired of her cousin as they gained their room. "I am sure I have seen him before."

"It's the Englishman's valet, of course," cried Lizzie. "He must have just arrived."

Kathleen's heart beat quite loudly. Was it really he? and would he be at dinner? and oh, would he sit next to her? He had certainly made a wonderful impression on her, considering the few minutes of their acquaintance. She called him "Lord Reginald," not because it was his name, but because it was the name of the exquisite hero in her favourite novel. "I wonder," she thought, "why he has come here, instead of going straight home. Is it possible that he has followed me?"

"He"—we mean "Lord Reginald"—*was* at *table d'hôte*, and immediately came up to renew his acquaintance. Kathleen thought to herself that his eyes were quite as nice and his smile as pleasant as she had remembered them. Uncle Joseph quite took to the stranger, and indeed the young man had a genial way with him which made him attractive to all. The old Baroness told him the story of her loss, to which he listened with much attention, suggesting several things

to be done in order to set the police more on the track of the thief, while she got out her note-book and wrote down all his hints carefully. Then he turned to Miss Vincent again with a smile.

"How nice it is to meet you here!" he said. "I must have come by a different route. If I had only known which way you were going, we might have travelled together."

"Why, I thought you said that you were going straight through to London!" Kathleen put in, rather surprised.

"Lord Reginald" fixed his clear brown eyes upon her. "Unforeseen circumstances—I mean, a telegram—altered my plans; and I confess that I'm not sorry."

Kathleen blushed. She felt almost impertinent to have made any comment. "He must be a duke at least," she reflected, as she ate her soup. "Isn't he *distingué*?" she whispered to Lizzie.

"*Distingué*" was the correct word in use among Cathy's school-friends at Surbiton; Lizzie didn't very well know what it meant, but in order not to seem ignorant she said, "Oh, very!" After dinner she and Cathy looked in the visitors' book, where the newcomer had written, in a bold dashing hand—

"HON. RONALD FITZURSE,
St. James's Club, London."

At first it was rather a blow. So he was only an Honourable! "But that's better than nothing, and 'Ronald Fitzurse' is nearly as pretty as 'Lord Reginald,'" Cathy consoled herself by reflecting. Such an air of distinction about that "St. James's Club!" and everybody knows that an "Honourable" means a Peer's son. (Evidently the Peerage had been well studied at Miss Peard's.)

The days went on, and the Honourable Ronald Fitzurse and the two young ladies became fast friends. Indeed, that is hardly enough to say, because everybody knows to what results lovely autumn days, in a delicious country deep in pine woods, will lead with idle young men of twenty-five or so, and romantic girls of seventeen. There was really no help for it. Uncle Joseph was certainly not a wise or a far-seeing guardian. He should have anticipated all this; but he was interested in the good dinners (they had a capital *chef* at the inn), and, in fact, he really saw very little.

We will now skip over a period of ten days or so, to one moonlit evening late in August; time, nearly ten o'clock; Mr. Porter snoring peacefully in an armchair in the *salon;* outside, on the terrace, a couple slowly pacing to and fro. A white dress and a twinkle of diamonds glimmer through the faint light.

"Ronald!"

"My darling!"

"I've been thinking—perhaps we ought to tell uncle?"

"But, my love, I thought I had explained all that to you. It would not be right for me to make our engagement public until I obtain my father's consent; he is somewhat of a despot, you must know, in a small way!" (laughing)—"but it will, I hope, not be so very difficult to get; and then, *then*, I shall come and claim my Kathleen—my sweet little Irish flower—for my own!"

"But suppose Lord Fitzurse disapproves—suppose he should not like me?"

"Nonsense, my darling! How could anyone not love my Kathleen? And oh, how I long to introduce you to my mother, and my aunt, the Duchess of Kingstown (I am half-Irish, you see, as well as you)! She is just a little difficult to get on with, just at first—rather dignified and stately, you know; but I expect her to do great things for me, and she must soon forgive you, my own one, for not being a countess in your own right!"

Ten o'clock strikes. They must go in, as Uncle Porter will soon be waking up. It will not do to arouse his suspicions as yet. Near the door Lizzie, the unflagging little chaperon, is stationed. Lizzie, like all girls of her age, dearly loves a bit of romance, and is duly awed by Cathy's accounts of the magnificence of her suitor, and of her prospective grandeur.

"But what does he talk about all the time?" she had asked, curiously, in the early stages of the courtship, jealous at first of the stranger's appropriation of her cousin.

"Oh! it isn't what he *says*, it's what he *looks*," returned Miss Vincent, eagerly; "and he is *so* handsome! the very image of Vavasour Fitzclarence, you know, in the 'Phantom Hand'! It's quite an honour to be noticed by him; you can easily tell that. Did you see how those German ladies looked at us to-day?"

But now things had progressed much further; and Kathleen did not mind how much the German ladies talked of her among themselves, so long as they did not make Mr. Porter the recipient of their confidences. Lizzie, of course, had been duly sworn to secrecy, and they had another ally in the old baroness, who was the willing sympathiser and confidante of the young couple. She practised on Mr. Porter all her powers of fascination, and kept his attention during many little *tête-à-têtes* between Kathleen and her lover, which could not otherwise have been so well managed. The Hon. Ronald had been so kind, and had exerted himself so much on her behalf; and although the missing banknotes were not yet exactly forthcoming, still he was now on their track, and the old lady had a grateful heart.

There was only one thing that troubled Kathleen's mind. She couldn't get over a certain instinctive dislike she entertained to the Hon. Ronald's valet. It was foolish, unreasoning, she said to herself; but, curiously enough, Lizzie also shared it. There was nothing tangible to object to in the man; he was perfectly well-mannered and polite, and yet both the girls would go downstairs by a circuitous route rather than meet him lounging in the corridor. "He couldn't look at you straight," Lizzie said; which remark must have conveyed some idea to her mind only, the individual in question not being possessed of a squint. Ronald, it was true, seemed attached to his servant; he had several times allowed Kathleen's hints in that direction to pass unnoticed; but "he

shall not stay after we are married," she thought to herself.

The days sped on, and the time of departure drew unpleasantly near. The September skies were still bright, and now the Hon. Ronald, perhaps wishing to conciliate his beloved's guardian, suggested to Mr. Porter that they two should make a farewell tour through the country, and visit a certain old château, well worth seeing, about forty miles away. There were, he assured Mr. Porter, good horses to be had in the village below, and the ride would take them through the most beautiful part of the Black Forest. "It would be too far for the young ladies, I'm afraid," he said regretfully, "but I shall only take you away from them for a day or two—and Madame von Freigut."

"And I am here to take charge of them," said the baroness, coming forward and smiling.

Kathleen looked rather sad at the idea of being deprived, for two whole days, of her lover; but she maintained a discreet silence. Ronald, no doubt, had good reasons of his own for going with Uncle Joseph. Meanwhile Mr. Porter assented gladly to the proposal, and preparations were made for the ride. The morning dawned all that could be desired, but, alas! at the very moment when Mr. Fitzurse descended from the terrace into the courtyard to mount his horse, as ill-luck would have it his foot slipped, he staggered and fell to the ground. Cathy screamed, and John the valet ran to his master's assistance, and lifted him up, but he could not stand, and seemed in such pain that all idea of his going had to be given up. So he was carried to his room, where the ankle, pronounced to be twisted, was deftly bandaged by John, and Mr. Porter, after waiting to hear the sad verdict, rode away in solitude, not willing either to lose so fine a morning, or to incur the expense of a horse for nothing.

"CATHY STOLE A GLANCE AT HIM" (*p.* 410).

As Lizzie went upstairs after bidding her father good-bye (Cathy was in the *salon* with the baroness, making lint for the sufferer) she passed the Hon. Ronald's door on her way, and heard a voice, which she recognised as the objectionable John's, say, in what sounded like very sulky tones—

"It's uncommonly slow here, and I don't exactly see what you're driving at, but hang me if I can stand it much longer."

What followed was indistinguishable, and indeed Lizzie had too much sense of honour to stop and listen, but continued her way upstairs, feeling more than ever indignant with the rebellious John for daring to speak thus to a too indulgent master. "And to choose the very moment when he is sick and helpless!" Lizzie thought to herself.

Kathleen, meanwhile, was very sad. She longed for news of her lover, and her poor silly little heart was torn with pity for his imagined sufferings. What was therefore her relief when she and Lizzie were sitting together in the *salon* that afternoon to see the door open, and admit no other than the interesting invalid himself, supported by the arm of the faithful John. He made for the sofa, where in a moment Kathleen had deftly arranged the cushions, and he lay with his eyes closed, seemingly exhausted by the exertion. John departed, and presently Lizzie, shyly gathering up her work, went away too.

Then Cathy's little hand stole into Ronald's, as she tenderly asked after his hurt. "Aren't you rather imprudent to come down at all?" she murmured.

"I couldn't do without you, Kathleen," said the young man, opening his eyes. "To be kept up there, alone, debarred from you—impossible! My foot is only sprained; don't be alarmed. Painful just at first, but that's all. John almost carried me down, and he has bandaged it up comfortably. I am almost glad of the reason that has kept me beside you."

They were very happy together, and after a little while Ronald, who still kept Cathy's hand in his, drew playfully from her finger an old hoop ring, set in brilliants, that had been her mother's. "I must take this for a pattern," he said. "What sort of a ring shall it be, my love?"

"I don't mind, Ronald," Kathleen replied, blushing. "Anything that *you* choose I shall like."

"Diamonds suit you best," he murmured thoughtfully. "But the family diamonds," he went on, "will of course in time belong to my wife. The ladies of the Fitzurse family have always been renowned for their jewels. Well" (putting the trinket in his breast pocket) "I shall send you this ring back, my Kathleen, with another, and then you must promise me to wear the new ring in place of it."

He had dinner carried to him on his sofa by the smiling little German maid, and after their *table d'hôte* all the sympathising *pensionnaires* crowded round his couch, full of eager inquiries. The young Englishman had certainly won everyone's heart. The kind old baroness sat near him with her knitting, and Cathy, too, sat as near as she dared, for she would not yet challenge observation. Every now and then the Hon. Ronald looked towards her—just as "Lord Reginald" might have looked at Lady Celia—and that look made her happy.

A round game was presently proposed, and the suggestion met with everyone's approval. Among the company was a tall spare Englishman, middle-aged and rather bent, who had arrived that afternoon. Cathy had tried to talk to him at dinner—he sat in Ronald's vacant place—but had found him silent and not easy to get on with. He wore eye-glasses; and if there was anything she disliked, it was eye-glasses. Besides, he had such an unpleasant way of staring at her through them.

After some good old-fashioned cosmopolitan games, such as "Turn the Trencher," "What is my Thought Like?" etc., combined with much merriment and fun among the younger members of the party, someone suggested the telling of ghost stories. Accordingly all the company drew their chairs nearer to the flickering logs (the night was chilly, the Hon. Ronald's sofa being right in the chimney-corner), and prepared with a thrill to listen. It was a stormy, gusty evening, early dark, and the wind in the crevices of the time-worn old building had a sort of "eerie" sound, as of the Banshee crooning outside. Cathy, remembering the Irish legend, trembled as she heard it, and furtively looked towards Ronald for protection. The company, some in German, some in English, all related their experiences, or what they had heard of the supernatural, and presently the host joined in, telling a legend connected with the old monastery itself. A terrible story of a dark deed committed here somewhere about the fifteenth century, a monk bricked up in the wall of the chapel, whose unquiet spirit still occasionally roamed the corridors. "And zere is one room zat he will always go to," concluded the rosy landlord, who certainly didn't look as it any ghost ever came near enough to disturb *his* slumbers: "zat is Numéro——"

"Oh! I *hope* it isn't *my* room," Kathleen cried out excitedly at this juncture. "No. 16, up the little winding staircase."

Here she became again disagreeably conscious that the dark silent stranger's eyes were fixed upon her own, and then, as it seemed to her, on the shining diamond stars in her hair. Involuntarily she shrank back a little. "I wish he wouldn't," she thought to herself; "he ought to know that it's very rude to stare so."

"Ach, nein!" the landlord said cheerily, "do not alarm yourself, mein Fraulein. Zis room, I haf locked it up long ago—ze room hinter ze chapel—I no more gif it to fremden."

And then the stories went on, increasing in horror, till at last the Honourable Ronald—who seemed, as the ladies said, to have quite got over the shock of the accident—capped them all by a tale so thrilling in interest and horror that the baroness screamed, and insisted that no more should be told, as it was already midnight. Kathleen had one farewell look—one touch of Ronald's hand—that was all, before she and Lizzie were carried off to bed by Madame von Freigut.

"Do not dream of anything terrible," said that kind lady, as she bade good-night to her charges at their own door, the aforesaid number 16. And she further whispered smilingly to Cathy, "So the *Herzenskönig* was not seriously hurt, after all." Madame von Freigut had but one fault—exuberance of sentiment.

Lizzie, tired after such a long day, was soon in bed

and sleeping soundly. Cathy sat before the tiny square of looking-glass which was all the accommodation the room afforded in that line, and as she shook out her long wavy hair she thoughtfully pondered over the situation. Every now and then a smile came to her face as she thought of Ronald, or of what he had said. *Was* she pretty? She looked at the reflection in the glass. It seemed to say "yes"; and she took off the diamond spray, in which she had been trying to imagine herself already Lady Fitzurse, and put it away reluctantly. It was only then that her eyes fell on a note fastened to the pincushion. She took it up and opened it mechanically; "probably the washing bill," she thought. But she dropped it again as though it burnt her fingers. This was what she read :—

"How could you be so imprudent as to mention the number of your room among a party of strangers? Be careful to lock your door to-night, and, if you have any valuables, put them at once into safe keeping."

Kathleen trembled. Who was the anonymous writer of this strange missive? He or she (but it looked like a man's hand) must have been among the company this evening—how else could he have overheard her remark? And how had the note got on the pincushion? Oh! ah! of course, she had told the number of her room. She looked again at the writing—was it Ronald's? It was a bold large hand, something like his. But no! he would surely have warned her in person, instead of frightening her in this way. And what if a robber—perhaps the strange writer himself—should be in the room now, with intent to murder her? That was not a very sensible conclusion, but Cathy nevertheless (perhaps her usually healthy nerves had been a little shaken by the ghost stories) looked well under every piece of furniture before she went to bed that night. She stood one moment irresolute, before taking the last flying leap; should she make an alarm or go to Uncle Porter? Oh no; she remembered that he was gone out riding, and would not be back until to-morrow night. Well, she must just fasten her door securely, and try to go to sleep; it would be a pity to frighten Lizzie; to-morrow she would tell Ronald all about it.

Kathleen slept that night with her diamonds, and most of her small trinkets, under her pillow; they were knobby to sleep on, and she tossed and tumbled restlessly, waking every now and then to tremble anew, to grieve over Ronald's sprained ankle, or to wonder how the duchess, his aunt, would take the news of his engagement, which must now soon be broken to the family circle, what Uncle Joseph would say, etc. etc. During one of these fragmentary wakings she seemed, though the wind was still high, to hear a faint step outside, and what *sounded* like the description of the old monk's tread. It was quite dark, except for the faintest glimmering ray of moonlight through the small mullioned window. Horror! was that the creak of the latch being slowly lifted! Cathy held her breath; she dared not move or cry. Ghosts could get through barred doors; *that* she knew too well. Again a great swell of wind—then—hush! all is quiet again—no sound. "It *must* have been imagination, and those silly stories," she thought with a sigh, as she held on to Lizzie's flaxen tails for protection, and fell asleep so.

The sun was already high when she awoke; she hurriedly dressed, saying nothing to her cousin about the affair of the note. It was a bright warm morning after the storm, and presently the Hon. Ronald appeared, helped down on to the terrace by the stalwart John; and himself and his wounded ankle were soon comfortably disposed along the ivy-covered bench, which the thoughtful baroness had well supplied with cushions.

"Ach!" she said as she came up to him, "I haf goot news, my friend. My lawyer, he write me he is now on de drack of de real tief—which take my papers. Is it not goot? and you were so kind to haf gif me your help from de first."

Mr. Fitzurse duly expressed his delight, but the baroness noticed how pale he looked this morning, and taking out her eternal knitting wandered away, kind soul, to some spot from whence she could overlook the invalid, and yet not disturb him by her presence.

Presently Kathleen spied him out, and coming up confided to him her woes of the preceding night.

"Oh, Ronald," she said, "I was *so* frightened! If it hadn't been that I knew *you* were near, and would help me, I don't know what I *should* have done. Take them—take these diamonds, Ronald dear," thrusting a case into his hands, "and please take care of them for me; and oh! read this note that I found on my table last night. Was it so *very* foolish of me to talk like that?"

The Honourable Ronald scanned the note, and started violently, crumpling it into his hand by an involuntary movement; then, recovering himself, he gave it back to Kathleen, saying—

"Don't be frightened, Cathy, dear. I ought never to have written it. You couldn't know, but there may be sharpers everywhere, even in this quiet inn. And I wrote that note to warn you."

"You—wrote the note?"

"Yes, I had no chance of speaking to you last night, as you know; so what could I do but write? But I'm sorry, my darling, that I alarmed you. Well, I'll take the parcel, since you insist on it, and will give it into the landlord's charge. Yes, that will be best."

"How pale you look!" said Kathleen, conscience-stricken (and indeed he did look ghastly for a moment); "I have let you talk too much."

"Oh, it's nothing; only a twinge I had just then in my foot. Dearest, would you mind getting hold of that fellow John for me? I'm tired, and I think an hour or two's rest before lunch will quite set me up. I shall be here again at two, without fail, and we will have a happy afternoon together, won't we?"

John came. "Good-bye," said Cathy, but her eyes spoke the rest.

His own fell before her earnest gaze, but he waved an adieu to her as he limped away, and she thought—poor Cathy!—that he had never looked more handsome or more splendid, his paleness contrasted so well with his dark hair and moustache, and his brown eyes had such a beautiful melancholy in them. She sighed,

"AND THEN THE STORIES WENT ON". (*p.* 414).

and went indoors to write letters till lunch-time—or, rather, till one o'clock dinner, for Germans prefer always to dine in the middle of the day; and after that meal, according to arrangement, she wandered towards the terrace.

"You will find the Herr in the garden," called out to her the rosy-cheeked Annetta. "He went out on the terrace with the *Diener* two hours ago."

"Two hours ago!" she thought reproachfully, "and I was not with him! But he told me two o'clock."

And then she reached the terrace that overlooked the narrow moated garden. Strange to say, Ronald, the rugs, and even the faithful John, had all disappeared, vanished apparently into thin air.

"He must have got tired of waiting for me," she thought sadly as she sat down on the low parapet bounding the moat. Some time elapsed, and still he came not. What could have happened? She was on the verge of bursting out crying, but pride withheld her. Was he worse, or what? The twilight gradually deepened, and at last Kathleen walked sadly back towards the house, snubbing poor little Lizzie, who, divining the cause of her cousin's woe-begone looks, attempted to offer consolation.

As Cathy was bathing her red eyes upstairs, and putting on her prettiest frock for Ronald's benefit, who would surely be at dinner that evening (alas! she could no longer wear the diamond spray) she and Lizzie became conscious of an unwonted stir in the house; and as they descended the old creaking staircase, they found people rushing hither and thither in great excitement. On the threshold of the open *salon*-door stood the silent Englishman who had joined their party the night before; his blue spectacles were more alarming than ever as he turned them towards the frightened girls.

"May I speak to you for a moment?" he said gravely, and motioned them to pass into the room. The baroness was already standing there, looking pale and haggard.

"Have you had anything to do with a fellow calling himself the Honourable Ronald Fitzurse?" the strange gentleman continued. "I should have warned you against him, as I have reasons for suspecting him to be a sharper and a swindler. Having just concluded my inquiries, I am now sure of it. In the interests of, among others, Madame von Freigut, who has been robbed by him and his accomplice, I have at length tracked him here, and now——"

But what followed was lost upon poor Kathleen, she gasped for breath during one moment, and then fainted away in real earnest in the baroness's arms.

We will pass over most of what followed: the sad scenes and explanations between Uncle Porter,

Madame von Freigut, and the unfortunate girl who had been so cruelly duped. Suffice it to say that the newly-arrived Englishman, the writer of the mysterious note, was none other than a detective in plain clothes, who had some time been "wanting" the Honourable Ronald, *alias* Jack Simpson, for forgery, and who had also happened to come on the track of his clever railway robbery. It is needless to remark that the Hon. Ronald and his accomplice got clear off with their booty, finding the detective—whose presence they had guessed from Cathy's note—on their heels.

Neither Miss Vincent nor the baroness ever saw their property again. Indeed, Kathleen, when she recovered from the shock, declined to take the slightest interest in the recovery of her jewels. Perhaps she thought they were fairly lost, and it is certain that their loss taught her a good lesson. Even in after-years, when as a happy bride of two-and-twenty she and her husband chanced to run the delinquent to earth, I regret to say she absolutely declined to prosecute, as she ought to have done. It may be that the visions were yet too fresh in her memory which the stories of "My aunt the duchess" had awakened in her.

"WHAT A PRETTY COMPLEXION!"

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.

NOW, everyone's complexion depends on a natural endowment, and the care we have taken of that endowment. Some persons by nature have a thick skin, some a thin. This we cannot alter. Some persons have a healthy skin; some have not an unhealthy skin, yet in some particular a defective action of it. These the physician can help, as indeed he can assist the most beautiful skin in maintaining a uniform standard of beauty, which it will not do of itself if the laws of Nature are defied.

Let us consider what constitutes the varieties of complexion: how does the blonde differ from the brunette? How are we to explain the albino at one end of the scale, the negro at the other? The complexion depends on the extent to which the blood can be seen shining through the semi-transparent skin. This will, of course, depend on the thickness of the skin. The thickest skins are found in those with black hair and eyes; thinnest in those with red or fair hair and grey eyes. But if the skin is exposed to any constant irritation, such as the scorch of the sun, a pigment which exists normally in the skin is increased in a very great degree; hence sunburn, and bronzed skin, and freckles. In the albino this natural pigment is absent. In the negro it is in excess, due, no doubt, to those persons being exposed year after year, and generation after generation, to a hot sun till the excess has become hereditary. Thus we can explain why young ladies are so careful not to expose their skins to a strong sun, but, as we shall see, they lose something by it, for light is one of the essentials to the health of the skin.

Before, however, we consider what are the essential conditions of a healthy skin, we must, we regret to say, make a few observations on an extremely baneful, and we fear growing, practice of calling in Art to assist or improve on Nature—what Mr. Gilbert somewhere accuses ladies of when he speaks of "emphasising their charms." Nor is this horrible practice confined to those who in the decay of life wish to conceal the ravages of time. It is very much commoner and more widespread than most persons think, and never deceives the practised eye. These deluded persons can never imitate the lustrous skin of Nature, though they very often try to, and the result is a hideous caricature. In most lights an "emphasised" skin has a dull lack-lustre look which cannot be mistaken. Out of many experiences of this kind of human weakness we may select one or two by way of example. We remember two pretty and charming sisters, aged eighteen and nineteen respectively, who took to this foolish habit, though they were both very pretty and had beautiful complexions. The result was that they were ultimately cut by many of their friends, who imputed to them, without any reason whatever, the vice of being "fast."

Another charming simple-minded woman used, among the gentlemen who were mean enough to be very glad to go to her entertainments, to be known by the name of the Whited Sepulchre. Her only fault was that she could not forget she had been pretty once, and was growing old. It used to be said of another lady who "emphasised" considerably that her husband one day remarked ill-temperedly: "For goodness sake, Mary, go and take all that stuff off!" But when he saw her again he repented, and said: "For pity's sake, Mary, go and put it *all* on again!" What could have caused this sudden revulsion of feeling? The fact is that continued use of paints and powders has a very ruinous effect on the skin. The skin is a great organ for removing waste products from the body, and as a consequence, should be constantly slightly moist, and all these applications have a very drying effect on it. The skin resists. It is covered with innumerable pores, some exuding out watery perspiration, others a greasy material, intended to keep it soft, and supple, and glossy. These pores work very hard to combat the unnaturally dry condition, and grow bigger, till, instead of being imperceptible, they form large unsightly pits, which are incurable. In addition to this, the skin becomes dull, opaque, lustreless. It has a sallow pasty look: in fact, it is irretrievably ruined as far as appearance goes, and anyone with any

experience can tell a face that has been maltreated with a view to improve the complexion. Once begun, the habit is very difficult to leave off, and deceives few but the victim. Still the practice goes on.

It is a comfort to know that most cosmetics and face powders are not deleterious in themselves, though some are, especially those called depilatories. A depilatory is a preparation for removing excessive growth of hair from the face. Fortunately, this is a rare condition in this country in young women, except in those lower types of humanity found in prisons and asylums, where the average is much higher, confirming the Tuscan proverb, "Salute from afar the beardless man and the bearded woman": the latter sometimes being a reversion to a lower or animal type, shown by heavy jaws and other signs.

Having spoken of the advantages of a good complexion, and we hope sufficiently warned the misguided against playing tricks with their skins, let us consider the proper method of making the best of the complexion Nature has given us.

There are certain things which should be attended to in the preservation of a good complexion; they may seem simple in themselves, and for that reason are frequently neglected; but if carefully borne in mind and attended to, it would be wonderful to many how their complexions would improve, and how few really unsightly skins there are in this world. We may risk enumerating them, though we may be laughed at by those who think they know all about it, but have never really and seriously given them a trial. The means proposed are cleanliness, attention to the general health, avoidance of great alterations of temperature, exercise, light, air, food, clothing, irritants of the skin, and avoidance of any undue strain on the skin.

Let us begin with cleanliness. Choose a good soap and water as soft as you can get it, and bathe once a day, using cold or warm water, as you find it agree with you best. The question of soaps and baths is too long to enter into here, but perhaps it would form an interesting paper some day. We will content ourselves by illustrating the management of a delicate part like the face. First make a free lather on clean hands, not on any flannel, glove, or towel; rub it well into the face, and wash it off with tepid water, of which there should be a large quantity in the basin, for if there is much free alkali in the soap used, this will thus be thoroughly diluted, and so will not injure the face. Finally, wash the face in clean cold water. This braces up the muscles of the skin, and acts as a tonic. If a person's face cannot stand the cold water to begin with, it may be gradually made colder. In case of a very delicate skin, if the soap be not at fault, the best way is to use a teaspoonful of sal volatile or a few drops of spirits of ammonia in a quart of distilled water. Any little black spots can be squeezed out with the finger-nails, or by placing the mouth of a watch-key round them and pressing them out, and they will probably not recur. Such is our advice; and yet we have met hundreds of ladies who boast that they never put soap near their faces. The skin, it should be remembered, is a great organ for removing waste from the body, which, if it collects on the body, putrefies, especially in those who lead sedentary lives and do not perspire freely every now and then, and so secure a good scour out for the pores. Look at any washing bill, and see the number of shirts a man sends to the wash compared with the number of jerseys, and you will find that he cares much more for show than for cleanliness. Probably the number ought to be reversed. A man ought to change the garments next his skin twice or thrice a week.

That the skin is a most important organ for getting rid of waste has been proved by many experiments in varnishing animals. They all die with symptoms of blood poisoning and a very low temperature. At the coronation ceremonies of Pope Leo X. a little child was chosen to represent an angel. He was covered with gum and then with gold-leaf. He died in a few hours. Yet many a man goes about covered with a paste composed of grease and dirt, and then complains of feeling cold. I well remember when, as house surgeon to a London hospital, the sister appealed to me about a recalcitrant old woman, who declined to have her head washed. I told her that it was the rule that all persons who were fit in health to be washed, were washed. "But, sorr," she pleaded, "you do not know what ye are about. My head has not been washed this forty-five year!" However, that very day the historic dirt of a generation and a half was ruthlessly washed away, with all its endearing associations, and the lady survived never to forgive me, no doubt. I must confess that I almost felt as if I had laid felonious hands on a heirloom.

We must consider shortly the influence of general health on the skin. That it does act there can be no doubt: the examples are innumerable, but rather medical; and young ladies who find their complexions becoming yellow, or a sort of pale green, or too red, should consult their doctors, for depend upon it there is something wrong, and until it is put right local treatment of the skin is useless. To take a familiar instance: it is always said that flushing of the face after meals is a sign of indigestion. No doubt the liver and the stomach greatly influence the skin. A person, for instance, with diabetes is subject to carbuncle. Naturally, any poison circulating in the blood will affect the skin, especially if it is removed by the skin.

As regards diet in relation to the skin, it is difficult to lay down general rules for all cases, but no doubt diet does greatly influence the skin; for instance, a man eats shell-fish and has an attack of nettle-rash. It is extremely advisable in skin disease to avoid all shell-fish (except oysters), goose, and pork, all strongly-spiced things, such as highly-seasoned soups, pickles, or curries. A mouthful of curry will cause many a person to perspire profusely about the head and face. Beer is extremely bad for most skin diseases. In all skin diseases over-fatigue and weakness are bad, and the skin is apt to become coarse, pallid, and relaxed when the body is ill nourished. Therefore, a nourishing and digestible diet is often of great importance, but it is impossible to prescribe general rules for all persons. A good breakfast is generally important, both as a sign of

health and to give the body strength for the day. The Duke of Wellington, Sir Walter Scott, and many other great men, depended much on their breakfasts. Doctors know these facts so well, that in some eruptions the patient has no local treatment whatever, and cases are brought to a successful issue by diet and internal medication alone.

That sudden changes of temperature are detrimental to the skin is well known, and we have merely to appeal to such familiar facts as chaps and chilblains to impress the fact; but what is not thoroughly realised is, that sudden change of temperature without re-action is deleterious, but that if re-action is established, as in the glow after a cold bath, no harm is done.

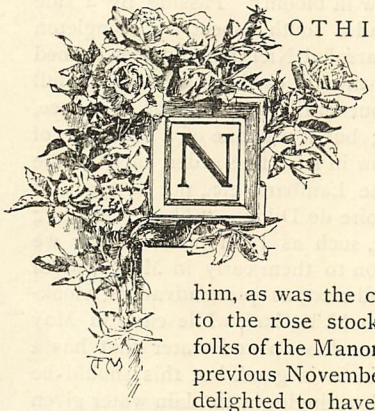
Fresh air and exercise are extremely important to those who wish to preserve the complexion. Some persons have a horror of the "dairymaid" style of beauty, and prefer the die-away, fading flower style. Do not listen to them. Depend upon it, a properly treated skin will be able to enjoy fresh air without being made rough or coarse; and remember that health is a terrible price to pay for an unwholesome and transient fad. Remember, young ladies, you may be mothers some day, and will assuredly transmit your follies and your frailties to helpless children. Look at the pale child of the slum, and take a warning. Exercise in the fresh air is one of the most potent makers of a good complexion.

Finally, avoid all irritation of the skin, especially scratching, which is often a mere habit. If your skins will not bear flannel next them, wear silk.

Lastly, if your relations with your best friend are a little strained, on account of the natural superiority of her complexion, do not put on any wash, but try these rules and consult your doctor. Finally remember that beauty is only skin deep, but personal cleanliness is a virtue capable of immediate repair whenever it shows the least sign of decay.

ROSE-GROWING AT HOLLYBUSH.

BY A PRACTICAL GARDENER.



MADAME FALCOT.

NOTHING captivated the heart of old Mr. Singleton so much as a *bonâ fide* interest in flowers candidly admitted by a friend. When, therefore, Mr. Haredale had recently asked some questions of him, as was the case in May, relative to the rose stocks which the young folks of the Manor had collected in the previous November, Mr. Singleton was delighted to have Mr. Haredale again as his companion in the garden among the roses in June.

Perhaps, however, the enthusiasm of the pupil was not quite so great as that of the old squire: nevertheless, Mr. Haredale was far too polished a man to betray any blunt lack of interest in the subject. Accordingly he quickened his pace in the Hollybush garden one morning as Mr. Singleton, suddenly noticing him slowly approaching, called out—

"See here, Haredale, you're just in time again, for I am about to operate on some of the very stocks you and your party got for me in November."

Now, the month of June was well advanced when this accidental meeting took place; moreover, the weather had been for some little time unusually warm and close for an early summer month, and a slight thunderstorm on the previous evening had developed a hot but somewhat broken morning with occasional showers.

"Had I waited for an opportune time and for a whole month," said the animated old gentleman, "I could not, Haredale, have a finer or better day for my work."

"Well, sir," replied Mr. Haredale, "you might, I should have thought, have selected a *finer* day, for, though the sun is out now, I was caught in a sharp shower an hour ago, and rather a heavy thunder-clap wound it up."

"Ah, my dear Haredale," replied Mr. Singleton, "a *finer* day you might doubtless have for cricket or tennis—indeed, I trust they won't play on the tennis lawn at all to-day, for they will sadly cut it up if they do—but by *finer* I mean one better adapted for my present purposes."

"Ah, I see, sir, but you seem to me prepared more for a surgical operation and——"

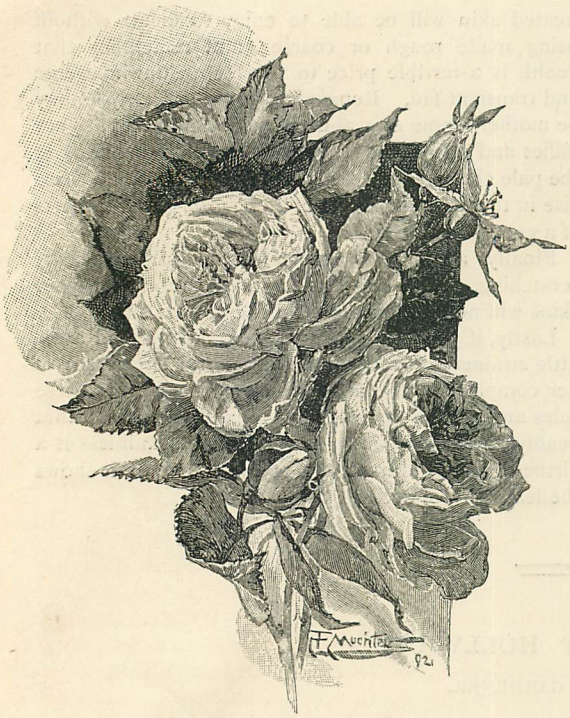
"So I am—so I am," broke in the old gentleman abruptly, with a laugh, "but, as a few large drops are beginning to fall from this passing cloud, let us step across to the potting shed a moment, and I will tell you more explicitly what I mean."

Under cover then from the passing thunder drops, Mr. Singleton fairly "button-holed" his pupil, and continued:

"We have had such a forward season this month that, as I saw everything was now favourable for the budding operation, I was determined to try at least a few stocks. Now, supposing we had had a prolonged drought, I think the chances of failure in budding roses are greater."

"Probably," interposed Mr. Haredale, "I shall better see your reason for this when you have told me a little more about it."

And the weather being now perfect again, Mr. Singleton said—



GLOIRE DE DIJON—TEA ROSE.

"Come and see one done, and we can talk it over as I go along."

The old gentleman's appearance somewhat diverted Mr. Haredale, for he had on him a sort of gardening apron, with several small pockets in it, while pieces of bast-matting were tucked loosely under the apron-string. A piece of ivory, looking for all the world like a very small paper-knife, protruded from one pocket, while in his hand he held a sharp, a very sharp budding knife—a too formidable-looking instrument to be trusted inside a pocket. Safely inside another, but a loose and larger pocket, Mr. Haredale also noticed several little branches or sprays of rose trees, that were about to be propagated. Altogether, his interest was rapidly increasing.

"Now," said Mr. Singleton, "the theory of budding is this:—At the base of the leaf is a minute bud, which, when the leaf has fallen away from it, becomes more visible, and would, in fact, if left upon the tree, become eventually a branch. Therefore, by taking off a leaf, *with part of the bark*, this little embryo bud comes with it, and then if I insert this inch of bark *under* the bark of one of these rose stocks or briars (which you were good enough to get for me some time ago), the two unite, the bud retaining all its original properties and qualities, although drawing henceforth all its strength and nourishment from the stock."

First, then, Mr. Singleton shortened both the branches of his stock to about a foot, and next cut a slit in the bark of one of them, within half an inch of the *base* of the branch upwards and upon its upper side, the slit being about an inch and a half long, making also a second cut across the first—in fact, in the form of a cross, thus †. Then with his ivory (or with the ivory handle of his budding-knife) he gently and slightly raised up the bark.

"Now," added the old gentleman, "we turn to our bud, and we neatly shave out of this little branch a thin piece of the wood, beginning just half an inch below a leaf and taking our knife along to half an inch above the leaf. And this little bit we now insert *under* the bark of the stock, so inserting it as to bring the leaf, which is really where the bud is, to the very spot of the cross cut. Then we carefully tie down the bark with our matting or some coarse worsted, such as I have here, and all is done. Now the weather being showery and cloudy, as well as warm, there will be no need to tie round any damp moss, which would have been the case had I attempted to bud during very *dry* and hot weather, when the operation often fails and everything gets burnt up."

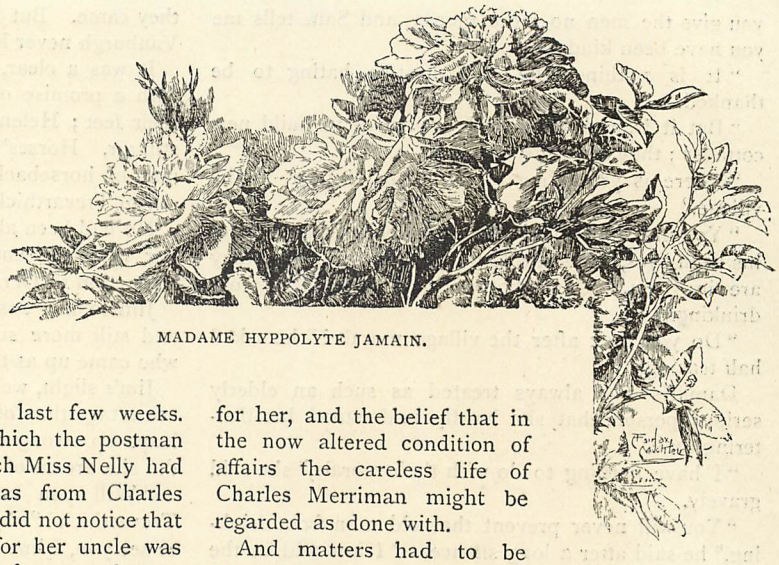
"Now," said Mr. Haredale, "I see what you mean by *fine* weather for rose-budding, thanks for your interesting lesson."

"These you see, Haredale, are roses of the future; but let us take a turn to another part of the garden, and see those that are now in bloom." Passing by a side of the house that had a south aspect, Mr. Singleton pointed out a fine Maréchal Niel that had been trained up it, and which a month earlier had been in full bloom. "One of our earliest specimens, you see, Haredale," said he; but it was one of a collection of tea-roses that was now in such fine order, such as the Devoniensis, Madame Lambard, etc., not to speak of the old-fashioned Gloire de Dijon. "The great thing for a good rose show, such as I am proud to say we have here, is attention to them early in March, when they are cut back, and next, as spring advances, a look-out for the grub should be had, while early in May syringing them with soft-soap and water that has a dash of turpentine in it is good, but this should be followed by a second syringing with plain water given immediately afterwards, while throughout the season suckers should be pulled up, and all growth along the

MARÉCHAL NIEL—TEA ROSE.

stock rubbed off. Then when bloom comes, some should be gathered, and decayed flowers clipped off, and, ah! here comes Amy with her scissors and flower basket for the very purpose."

Nelly, her sister, came almost running up behind her, but so beaming with health, and with such a triumphant look of happiness about her, that Mr. Haredale at once surmised that there was some cause for such an almost uncontrolled exuberance of spirits. Nor was he far wrong, for this is what had happened during the last few weeks.



MADAME HYPPOLYTE JAMAIN.

Amy was right about the letter which the postman had brought early in May, and which Miss Nelly had so speedily pocketed. And it was from Charles Merriman, too, but in her hurry she did not notice that the one which she gave her sister for her uncle was also in the same handwriting. The fact was that an uncle of Charlie Merriman had died some six months previously in India, leaving a noble estate and a still more noble amount of consols to his favourite nephew Charlie. And the two letters to Mr. Singleton and his niece Nelly came in earnest terms laying the whole at the feet of the young lady, and begging for the sanction and the blessing of old Mr. Singleton himself, for the sanction of the young lady he had no reason to doubt. For some time Mr. Singleton was opposed to the whole business: he was afraid of the wayward boy, and sometimes also of his wayward niece; but gradually the old gentleman began to thaw as he remembered the ample provision that there would be for her, and the belief that in the now altered condition of affairs the careless life of Charles Merriman might be regarded as done with.

And matters had to be hurried on, for it was thought essential that in less than two months Charles Merriman should make his appearance in India. So then it came to pass that in four weeks' time there was to be a pretty country wedding at Hollybush Manor. Need it be said that, when the important day arrived everyone was in raptures about the flowers, for old Bailey the gardener had been overheard to register a vow that on her wedding day "Miss Nelly should beat all the Jack-in-the-greens as ever was."

But a week after the wedding, and all was quiet again at Hollybush, visitors had gone, and Mr. Singleton was peacefully at work in his garden as if nothing had happened. And so the world wags on.

FORMED FOR CONQUEST.

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

"And why, since these be changed since May,
Shouldst *thou* change less than *they*?"

VANBURGH, Nixon, Helen, and Damaris, were walking to Vanburgh Court. Mr. and Mrs. Lemarcham were to meet them there. They were driving, and Helen, thinking that three were an awkward number, had asked Damaris to accompany them; Harry Nixon was to be her partner for the three miles.

A week had passed since the yachting party, a week which for Damaris had been occupied in keeping Sam from the "Three Jolly Fisherboys," with more or less success. But she felt that her interest in Sam was flagging a little; he was being pushed into the background of her thoughts.

Every day she and Gerald Vanburgh met. In his character of Helen's suitor, naturally he was much at her uncle's house; but the final words which made him Helen's were not yet spoken.

This day matters did not turn out as Helen wished. Before a mile was gone, there was a change of partners; Nixon walked with Helen, and Vanburgh with Damaris.

The air was cold, but they walked slowly for Helen's sake; she was not accustomed to the exercise.

Vanburgh and Damaris had not been alone together since the day they had rescued Sam from the mercy of the boys of Trentham.

"I want to thank you," she said abruptly. "I hear

you give the men no more money, and Sam tells me you have been kind to him."

"It is nothing," he said hastily, hating to be thanked.

"But it is, and I am told you mean to build new cottages; they are badly wanted."

"There is grumbling at my plans, I hear, in the village."

"You must not mind that," she looked up to meet his keen eyes, "the people will be pleased when they are in them. Good homes may keep them from drinking."

"Do you look after the village morals?" he asked half teasingly.

Damaris was always treated as such an elderly serious person, that she hardly understood his bantering tone.

"I have nothing to do with their morals," she said gravely.

"You will never prevent that old man from drinking," he said after a long silence. "I am told in the village that he is a confirmed drunkard."

"I suppose he is," she said under her breath; then she looked up with a colour flushing her face, her lips trembling, her eyes appealing, "but you will not give him more money, will you? It does him so much harm."

"I promise that he shall not have another penny from me."

"Thank you."

The colour faded from her cheek, the light from her eyes. Her face resumed once more its old expression or want of expression.

No words of Vanburgh's could again kindle that fire of earnestness during the remainder of the walk.

He found himself trying to do so with a keenness that surprised himself.

Once at the Court, Helen had no more reason to complain of Vanburgh's behaviour to her. He escorted her round the gardens and empty stables, he showed her the pictures, he asked her advice about some improvements that were to be made in the house. The housekeeper treated her with pointed respect; a rumour had evidently spread abroad that she was the future mistress of Vanburgh Court.

Damaris, quiet, indifferent, was unnoticed by the side of radiant, beautiful Helen.

It was late before they started for home. The moon was rising, and the woods in the Court grounds sloping down to the sea were bathed in the silvery light.

They were walking back. Helen had arranged they should walk, Helen who hated walking, but she hoped that the long miles with Vanburgh alone might bring him to the point. She regretted the arrangement when Harry Nixon had walked by her side in the morning, but it was too late to alter plans. Vanburgh and Nixon were returning to dine at her uncle's. Mr. Lemarcham's dogcart seated only two, and Helen knew Mrs. Lemarcham could not walk the three miles to Trentham, supposing Damaris and she changed places. There was no help for it, they must walk as they came. But Helen need not have feared; Gerald Vanburgh never left her side.

It was a clear, frosty night; the stars were bright with a promise of frost; the ground was hard under their feet; Helen's clear voice vibrated through the still air. Horses' hoofs clattered towards them, and a man on horseback pulled up by their side.

Jim Trevarthick accosted them.

He had been absent for ten days, attending a horse fair near the county town. This was his first introduction to Gerald Vanburgh.

Jim looked suspiciously from Helen to Vanburgh, and still more suspiciously from Nixon to Damaris, who came up as they stood talking together.

Jim's slight, well-knit figure never looked to better advantage than on horseback. Helen's fancy for him leapt up stronger than ever, but not for one instant did she dream of giving up Vanburgh for his sake.

"Will you come back and dine with us, Mr. Trevarthick?" she asked. "My uncle will be pleased to see you, I know."

Trevarthick accepted the invitation.

He wanted to see Mr. Vanburgh, who was a very great man in Trentham, and his susceptible vanity was alarmed that he might be ousted by these fine gentlemen from his place in the doctor's house. He regretted that he had accepted the invitation when he saw Mr. Vanburgh and Mr. Nixon appear in dress clothes. He turned sulky when he found little notice was paid him, and his manners became awkward and rude. He felt out of place, in his light coat and riding breeches, among the black coats and evening dresses. Even Damaris was in a white silk, Damaris, whom he had never seen in anything but a blue serge or a dark cotton dress. He thought that Vanburgh's silence was meant for a snub, and Nixon's kind endeavour to set the poor fellow at his ease he called to himself confounded impudence. He began the evening in a sullen mood: he ended it in a passionately jealous one.

He caught Vanburgh's eyes fixed on Damaris.

Only for an instant; the next Gerald was speaking to Mr. Lemarcham, but for Jim the instant had been long enough.

Damaris had no more trouble with old Sam. Vanburgh kept his word to her, and scattered no money among the fishermen. Helen had dropped a hint that she need not accept the invitations to the Court that Vanburgh was continually giving them. It was a broad hint, and there had been something said about keeping to her own room by her stepmother. Damaris rigidly refused the invitations, and never entered the downstairs rooms when Vanburgh was in the house.

But, somehow, avoid him as she might, scarcely a day passed that she did not meet him. At Mr. Rushton's—that gentleman had called on Vanburgh, and a liking had sprung up between them—on the cliffs, in the lanes, with Sam, everywhere, she met him.

"Why cannot he propose to Helen and finish it," she would wonder when he had left her. "I am tired of it all."

But the days passed and nothing happened.

Another worry to Damaris was Jim Trevarthick. He said nothing, he had long given up trying to make her marry him, but his miserable face and sad eyes began to haunt her. She was softening, changing, and perhaps a fellow-feeling made her pity him for his hopeless attachment. Her manner towards him became kinder.

Nixon came upon Vanburgh one afternoon leaning his elbows on the wall of the stone pier, and staring gloomily into the water.

"What's wrong, old chap?" the little man asked.

"Nothing."

Nixon also leant his arms on the top of the wall and smoked in silence.

"Do you believe she is in love with that farmer fellow?" asked Vanburgh suddenly.

"Who? Miss Desborough?"

Vanburgh bit his lip.

"No, Miss Lemarcham."

Harry Nixon gave a long, low whistle.

"That's it, is it?" he said.

Vanburgh turned savagely upon him.

"What do you mean, you fool, by 'That's it, is it?'" mimicking Nixon's voice. "Can't I ask a question and get a civil answer to it?"

Nixon allowed him time to cool down before he spoke again.

"Miss Lemarcham does not care two straws about the fellow," he said at last. "What makes you think she does?"

"One of the fishermen said so. Not that it matters to me," he said hastily, pulling himself up; "of course it does not matter to me."

"Of course not."

"I am in a beast of a temper this morning, Nixon, my liver must be out of order."

"Something else than your liver," muttered Harry, as Vanburgh walked away. "It is your heart, my friend, and a pretty mess you have got yourself into!"

Helen observed a change in Vanburgh. He had never been an ardent lover, for that matter she knew he was not in love with her; but that was different from the neglect with which he often treated her now. He forgot to answer her sometimes, or answered Yes when it should have been No; once she saw him deliberately leave her side and seat himself by her uncle. Nearly a month had passed since his arrival in Trentham and matters were no further advanced than on the first day; sometimes Helen feared they were not as far. Every morning brought her threatening letters from the London tradespeople, and she knew that only her engagement to a rich man would satisfy them. What could be the reason for delay on his part? Surely he was not going to throw her over for someone else? But there was no one.

He had met only the Matthews in Trentham besides herself and Damaris. It was not one of the Matthews, that was impossible, and Damaris—she stopped there, Damaris! But that could not be; was it likely that Damaris could rival her? And yet—she clenched her hand and drew a long breath. Jim Trevarthick was faithful to this cousin of hers. All her wiles had not shaken him in his firm affection for this Damaris. How she, Helen, hated her!

She reassured herself in a few minutes. Gerald Vanburgh and Damaris never spoke to one another; she never saw them look at one another the few times they had been together in her presence. A sudden remembrance took her breath away. Had not Damaris mentioned the evening before that she had met Mr. Vanburgh? Did they meet without her knowledge? If he should be leaving her for Damaris!

She paced up and down the bedroom, a passion of hatred in her heart.

Helen, without principles or affections, made a mistake in thinking that Vanburgh would treat her as she would have treated him, cases being reversed. She never thought that he might hesitate to throw her over for the sake of her cousin; that he might feel bound in honour to herself.

An event that took place that same afternoon heightened her apprehensions and deepened her hatred of Damaris.

They were on the pier. Helen, Vanburgh, and Nixon had walked down together. There were directions Vanburgh wished to give the captain of his yacht, and Nixon and Helen accompanied him. Standing at the end of the stone pier leaning against the wall was Damaris, and Jim Trevarthick stood by her side. He had but that moment chanced to come, to Helen and Vanburgh he looked as though he had been there some time.

Vanburgh gave his orders to the captain; he never glanced in the direction of the two at the further end of the pier after the first look. He turned on his heel and was walking away when Helen stopped him.

"I want to speak to Damaris," she said.

She approached the two, and Nixon and Vanburgh loitered behind waiting for her.

It was low tide, and the schooners and boats by the pier side were lying high and dry on the shingle.

Vanburgh looked down on the children playing in the pools between the boats. He steadily kept his eyes averted from the three at the end of the pier.

A sharp exclamation from Nixon roused him—

"Look at that young brute of a savage!"

A young fisherman seated on the edge of a boat was torturing a cat. He was literally cutting the poor thing in pieces.

Cruelty to animals always made Vanburgh angry, and this cat was cruelly mangled. The fisherman was a broad-shouldered, hulking young brute, and he was gloating over the poor beast's agony.

Vanburgh gave one glance at this piece of fiendish cruelty; than he ran down the steps of the pier and struck the young man across the face with the malacca cane he held in his hand.

"Let go the cat," he said huskily.

In his surprise the fisherman let the cat drop and Vanburgh put his heel on its head and crushed the tortured, flickering life out; it was the most merciful thing to do.

"Now," he said between his set teeth, "you are

going to receive the worst thrashing you ever had in your life."

Nixon had not seen him in such a passion for years. His face was white and his eyes blazing as he held the young fellow by the collar. The young fisherman might struggle and kick; he was like a puppy in Vanburgh's grasp. The storm of blows from the lithe, cutting cane covered his body; his jersey was in rags and yet Vanburgh's arm did not tire. A crowd assembled round them, brought down from the village by the fisherman's cries and curses. They dared not interfere, but Nixon heard mutterings against Vanburgh. He was growing frightened; twice he begged Vanburgh to stop, but his passion made him deaf. The young fisherman was growing sick and faint with the pain, he lay passive in Vanburgh's grasp. Nixon caught his arm to stay the blows, but he was shaken off like a feather. Vanburgh was blind and mad with passion, and Nixon could only trust he would grow exhausted before he had done the man a serious injury.

Damaris pushed her way through the crowd. She left Helen and Trevarthick on the pier; they were saying to one another, "What a fuss to make about a cat!"

She caught Vanburgh's uplifted arm.

"Stop," she said, "you have punished the man enough."

A change came over Gerald's infuriated face. He saw what he had done, the fainting condition of the man, the cut jersey.

He let him go and the young fellow dropped in a limp heap at his feet. He broke his cane into two pieces and tossed it away from him.

Damaris heard him mutter something as he passed her, but she could not distinguish the words. He shouldered his way through the crowd pressing round to help the young fisherman, and waved Nixon back when he followed him.

"Let me be alone," he said, and he went aboard his yacht and shut himself into his cabin.

Nixon appeased the wounded youth's mother with money, and told her that her son deserved the thrashing he had received.

He walked with Damaris to her home.

"Vanburgh will worry for days over this show of temper," he said to her. "You must not think he is bad-tempered because of this. It is only now and then it occurs, and it was diabolical cruelty the way that young man was treating the cat."

"Mr. Nixon need not excuse him to me," said Damaris to herself when she was alone.

Helen's worst fears were realised; she had seen all from the pier. Her cousin's intervention and Vanburgh's immediate pause. Damaris had a power over him that she had not. How she hated, hated, hated her! Here was Vanburgh slipping from her grasp, and Trevarthick she had never held. What charm was there in Damaris? What could it be that attracted these two men?

For the first time in her life Helen could not sleep her usual calm slumber that night.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

"We have met late—it is too late to meet.
O friend, not more than friend!"

DAMARIS was walking back from Mr. Rushton's, escorted by his man-servant. She had been dining with him, and he had told her she was improving in looks.

"You look as though you had come down to the earth and taken an interest in us poor mortals," he said.

She walked along, head bent, her gloveless hands clasped behind her under her long cloak.

The night was clear and cold, there was no moon, but the frosty stars gave enough light to make walking not unpleasant.

Half-way down the narrow lane, from the shadow of the high hedge stepped a man's figure.

Damaris started and stood still.

"I will see Miss Lemarcham home, Williams; you need not come any farther."

"Very well, sir."

Williams turned back with a knowing grin on his face.

"Williams could have seen me home, Mr. Vanburgh," said Damaris, hoping her voice was steadier than her heart.

"I wanted to speak to you alone."

Damaris had quickened her steps but he put his hand on her arm and stopped her.

"You saw my diabolical temper yesterday. I am sorry I——"

He passed his hand over his forehead.

"I was put out before I saw that brute, but I know that is no excuse—there is none. I was mad with passion when I thrashed him. If you had not stopped me I might have injured him."

A brief silence fell on them.

"I suppose you are disgusted with me?" he asked wistfully.

"No, I am not disgusted."

"You will forgive me?"

She raised her head and looked him steadily in the face.

"There is nothing for me to forgive. You have not harmed me; you are not my relation, you need not seek my forgiveness."

The hollow murmur of the waves on the pebbly beach sounded very near that night.

"No, I am not a relation, but—perhaps I may be—some day."

She turned away her head and stared into the dark hedge.

"You know why I came here, Damaris?"

She nodded her head.

"To ask your cousin to be my wife. But suppose when I came, I fell in love, passionately in love, body and soul, with—another woman. What then Damaris?"

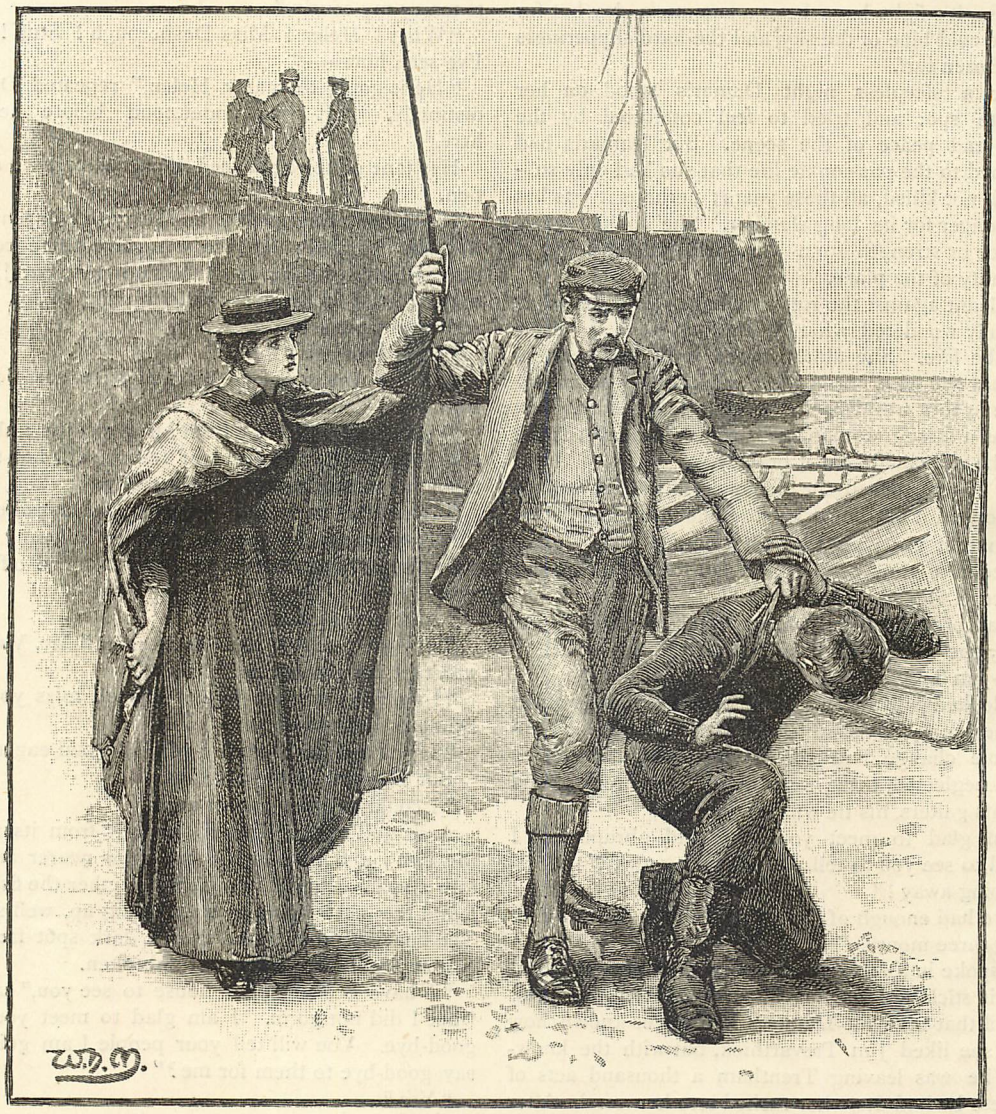
"I should be sorry for you."

After those words they walked on. Neither spoke again until the end of the lane was nearly reached.

"It must be comfortable to be as cold as you are," he said bitterly.

Damaris drooped her head. If she were cold fire was not hot.

"You are so far removed from us poor men and women, you have no hopes or fears; you live in a quiet, calm world, and look down on us struggling below."



"SHE CAUGHT VANBURGH'S UPLIFTED ARM" (*p.* 424).

"Oh, stop!" said Damaris breathlessly.

She put up her hand in supplication, and he caught and held it.

"You shall hear everything——" he began.

Damaris drew her hand from his, and steadied her trembling lips.

"When you are half-engaged to Helen," she said, "to Helen, my cousin?"

She faced him with a steady face, and before her apparent calm, he choked back the passionate words on his lips.

"Yes, I was forgetting Miss Desborough. Shall we move on? It is cold to-night," he said.

The high road reached, Damaris stopped again.

"You need not come with me any further," she said. "I can quite easily go home alone now."

"I shall see you to your father's house."

Damaris was struggling to keep back her tears. She who never cried, was she about to break into school-girlish, hysterical weeping? If he would only leave her! She stumbled, her eyes blinded by her tears: he caught her from falling and saw the dumb agony in her face.

"Damaris!"

But she pushed him away and ran down the road with light, quick steps to her father's house.

He did not attempt to follow her.

* * * * *

The sea was breaking in thin white lines below Cliff. A crisp, bright feeling filled the air, the sky was cloudless, it might have been a summer's day but for the pale cold blue of the sky, and the hard slipperiness of the frozen turf.

After a sleepless night Damaris stood on her favourite spot and tried to feel comforted by the beauty and peace of the scene. But Damaris had awakened to the passionate life that she had only suppressed, not killed, all these years; perhaps it was but the stronger for its long slumber. She could receive no peace or strength from the quiet surroundings or the beauty of the place.

She leant against the rotten palings round the edge, and dully wondered what death from such a height would be like. She almost found it in her heart to wish that she were one of those weak souls who finding trouble in this world seek the next too hastily. But she was a strong woman, and whatever her lot in life might be she could bear it bravely.

Her fingers picked the lichen from the old railings and dropped it on the rocks, three hundred feet below. What might not pass through a human mind during the second of time between the fall from the cliff and those cruel jagged rocks?

A bar of the rotten palings cracked beneath her weight, she drew back from the edge and turned to meet—Jim Trevarthick.

He looked pale and worn: there was no longer about him the jaunty, satisfied air of former days. An indefinable change had come upon him, his clothes looked neglected, there were traces of a week's mud upon his gaiters, his tie was on one side.

"I'm glad to meet you," he said abruptly. "I wanted to see you to tell you I'm going away."

"Going away!"

"I've had enough of Trentham: I'm going away for two or three months."

He spoke in a reckless, hard tone, flicking up the turf with his stick and keeping his eyes averted from hers.

Until that moment Damaris had never known how much she liked Jim Trevarthick, but with the knowledge he was leaving Trentham a thousand acts of kindness he had done her rushed into her mind. After all, she would miss him!

"Oh, Jim!" she said involuntarily.

He turned quickly and looked eagerly into her eyes. But the hope her exclamation brought to life died away when he met them.

"I may go away for good. I've been talking to mother about it, and she's agreeable. If Mr. Vanburgh will take back the lease, I shall give it up. Do you think he will?"

"I know nothing about Mr. Vanburgh."

"So you say!"

Jim's florid face grew pale and set. He flicked at the turf more savagely.

"I suppose I must wish you and him joy," he said. "I've seen for the last week or so what's been coming, and——"

He stopped, unable to continue and cleared his throat noisily.

"You are wrong, quite wrong," said Damaris in a low tone, looking away from him. "He—he is going to marry my cousin."

"What! Helen! Miss Desborough! Stuff! Why I've seen him——"

"He is going to marry Helen," repeated Damaris distinctly. "It was understood before he came here."

Her tone of voice silenced him and carried conviction.

He looked at her profile as she gazed beyond him. She was changed; her face was alive, there could be no cavilling at want of expression now, but Jim saw only suffering in the eyes and for once in his life he rose above himself.

"I am sorry," he said.

And for the moment he was truly sorry for her pain.

Damaris shrank away from his sympathy; she was a proud woman and years of reserve did not tend to make her accept sympathy gratefully.

"When do you intend leaving?" she asked quickly.

"To-morrow, I expect. Mother is going to her cousin's for Christmas, and I want to be off out of this."

"And your farm?"

"I've got a cousin to look after it, if Mr. Vanburgh won't let me give up the lease."

"I am sorry you are going. I shall miss you," said Damaris with a sigh.

"If you ask me to stay, I will," he said eagerly.

But Damaris shook her head.

"I could not, Jim; I am sorry."

A seagull screamed and flew out from its nest in the cliff; a dot upon the sea drew nearer and grew into a boat. Damaris wondered whether the fisherman found the lobster-pots he was pulling up, well-stocked. The boat dwindled again into a dark spot far out at sea, and still the silence was unbroken.

"I have been to your house to see you," said Jim, "but I did not go in. I am glad to meet you to say good-bye. You will tell your people I am going, and say good-bye to them for me?"

"Yes."

She held out her hand and he took it.

"Couldn't you ever think of me, Damaris?"

"Never, Jim, I am afraid."

"Not—when you'd forgotten—the other chap?"

She pulled her hand away.

"There! you're angry. I'm sorry I said that. I know there's no hope for me, but don't let us part in anger. Most likely you'll never see me again, and——" his voice broke.

Damaris was sorry for him. She knew what he was suffering, and that he did not suffer the less because his nature was coarse. But she could not bear his reference to "the other chap."

"Poor Jim," she said kindly, "you are unlucky to have cared for me."

"Give me something to keep in remembrance of you, before I go. I never had anything of yours but a bit of seaweed you dropped one day, years ago, when you were collecting it for putting in a book, and I helped you to look for it on the rocks. I have got a little red bit you let fall from your bunch. Don't you remember?"

But Damaris had forgotten; the incident had slipped from her memory.

"Well, never mind. I remember most things about you, Damaris; and I've kept that piece of seaweed. But I want you to give me something yourself; something I can keep for ever."

Damaris looked at her hands, but she wore only one ring, and that was her mother's wedding ring; she could not give him that. Hanging on her watch-chain was one trinket, a small gold hand. She tried to take it off the chain but it was too firmly fastened.

"Let me do it," he said.

With his strong fingers he wrenched the trinket off. It was the only ornament hanging on the chain; it hung down, the broken link showing something had been wrenched away.

"I give you that," she said, and put it in his hand.

"Jim, try to forget me," she added. "I am sorry for the way I have behaved to you, but you will forgive me?"

"Ay, I forgive."

"And some day you must come back to Trentham, and we shall be able to laugh over our troubles, and you will have a nice, pretty wife, and wonder how you ever cared for Damaris Lemarcham."

"Shall I?" he said bitterly. "I don't know; I don't feel like it at present."

"Good-bye."

Silently they shook hands, and Damaris turned away. She did not take the path towards Trentham; she wanted to be alone and she climbed over the hill. Once she looked back from the crest of the moor. Jim was standing with his arms on the palings at the edge of the cliff, looking at something he held in his hand.

Damaris knew what it was.

If she had waited another moment, she would have seen Helen walking along the cliff towards him. Helen was frantic. Since the morning of the scene on the pier she had not seen Gerald Vanburgh; that was the day before yesterday, and she suspected that Damaris and he had met last evening. She heard her cousin, the night before, enter the house with a hurried step, and listening at her bedroom door she heard her sobbing. Something had happened. What was it?

Helen had waited through the morning expecting to see Vanburgh; she dreaded to hear the announcement of his engagement to Damaris. What was to become of her if it were so? Here she was stranded in this country place with not enough money to take her away, and her creditors clamouring to be paid. Her uncle would give her what he could, but that was little, and she knew that Mrs. Lemarcham would soon stop that source of income. What was to become of her? Even Jim Trevarthick had deserted her. The last week she had barely seen him, and her most charming smile and fascinating manner could not win him for a moment from his gloomy abstraction.

She knew to whom she owed it all: to Damaris.

Helen did not pause to consider that Damaris was innocent; in the tumult of her mind she was incapable of judging. She felt that through Damaris she was losing the man she loved—so she called the fancy she had for Trevarthick—and the man she intended to marry. If ever an opportunity came to her of hurting Damaris she meant to make use of it.

The long hours of the morning passed, and Vanburgh came not. At the early dinner Damaris did not appear, her stepmother said she had gone for a long walk, and Helen with a fierce throb suspected she had gone to meet Gerald Vanburgh. She went to her room with a pretence of lying down, but instead, she put on a hat and jacket and went out of doors. Sarah was singing over her washing up in the kitchen; Mr. Lemarcham was dozing in the dining-room, a newspaper on his knees.

Mrs. Lemarcham had run across to Mrs. Vickers for a gossip. No one saw Helen leave the house, and she was glad: there would have been a chorus of questions if Mrs. Lemarcham or her uncle had seen her. To sleep for an hour after the early dinner was a pet practice of Helen's.

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

"O Death, O Beyond,
Thou art sweet, thou art strange."

SHE followed the path, over the cliff, not that she *knew* that Damaris had taken the same road, but she suspected she would go to her favourite spot.

On the top of the cliff she came upon Jim Trevarthick looking at the small gold hand Damaris had given him. He closed his fingers on the trinket, but not before Helen had seen what he held.

So Damaris had been to meet Jim Trevarthick!

"I see what you have," she said with a sneer. "You need not try to hide it. Damaris has given it to you."

"It does not matter to you if she has!" he retorted.

He stood with his back to the palings round the edge of the cliff, and faced her.

Her eyes were blazing, her figure drawn to its full height, an angry spot of colour on each cheek.

"The good, virtuous Damaris! You don't think me good enough to tie her shoe-strings, do you? Yet she gives one man love-tokens, and is doing her best to catch another."

"Hold your tongue about your cousin," he said roughly. "She gave me this because I am going away for good to-morrow, and I wanted something to remember her by."

"Going away for good?"

"Yes, I have been a fool, and I'm going to clear out of it all."

"Because she won't marry you?"

"Leave her name out of the question, will you?" he said savagely.

"You treat me differently now from what you did a few weeks ago, Jim."

"I was a fool," he repeated awkwardly.

"In fact you were making a catspaw of me, thinking you might make her jealous by running after me, that was it, was it not?"

"Miss Desborough——"

"Miss Desborough! I was Helen not long ago to you."

"I have behaved like a scamp to you," said Trevarthick bravely. "I—I meant nothing, and I thought you meant the same, that it was only a flirtation. I did want to forget her, and I thought I could with you —you are so beautiful—but it was all of no use, and to-morrow I am going away."

Helen was furious.

"I will not bear it," she said, her anger choking her and making her voice thick and husky. "I will not be thrown aside for Damaris, Damaris whom I hate, thrown aside by you, a common, uneducated farmer, a man whom I honoured by speaking to. I will not have it, I will not." She was incoherent from passion, she knew not what she said, what threats she uttered.

"You could kiss me though I am a common farmer," he said, when she paused to draw breath.

Helen's nature was not deep enough for her passion to have long duration. She was gaining nothing by this display of temper; Trevarthick could not be won back by anger.

She pressed her handkerchief against her trembling lips and paused.

"Forgive me, Jim," she said at last. "I ought not to have said that, but I am so miserable."

There were tears in her eyes when she lifted them to his.

Poor Jim was too miserable himself not to pity her. He thought it was a sad thing she should care for him so much more than he cared for her, and she certainly was very beautiful.

"Everyone is deserting me for Damaris," she continued with a sob, "and it is hard. Where did she go when she left you?"

"Over the moor."

Helen drew a breath of relief; that was not the way to Vanburgh Court.

"How cold it is," said Jim with a shiver.

"You really go to-morrow?" said Helen. "Nothing will make you stay?"

"Nothing."

She wiped away some very real tears—she did like Jim.

The short winter afternoon was closing; the sun was drawing near the horizon in a blaze of red.

"Where are you going?"

"To the north of England. I mean to take a small farm and live there."

A hush lay on the land; the sea murmured and heaved below.

"I do hate that sound," said Helen petulantly.

He turned to look down at the waves breaking on the pebbles, his foot slipped on the frost-hardened turf, and he caught at the railing to steady himself. But the rotten wood broke beneath his hand, he slipped again and flung out his hand to save himself. There was nothing to lay hold of. His pallid face agonised with fear met Helen's horrified gaze for a flash of time that was shorter than the sixtieth part of a second. She stood alone on the edge of the cliff and Jim Trevarthick lay on the jagged rocks below.

Dazed with horror she paused for a moment, then with hurried steps she ran down the sheep track on her left into the valley of Lynscombe. The steep hillside was slippery with frost, but she ran regardless of the chance of a fall. It was the only way to gain the shore and clamber round the rocks to the foot of Cliff. The cottage where Mother Cook lived was barely out of her path. Helen called to the old woman but the cottage was empty: she was out.

Helen shuddered at what she was to see when she reached the foot of the cliff. But she could not hesitate; he might be alive. She knew nothing about accidents, and she thought he might still be breathing.

She clambered over the rocks, but she was already beginning to remember Helen Desborough, the first shock had taken her out of herself, but she was recovering, and she was careful not to cut her hands and to keep her dress from the pools of salt water.

She paused before she stepped from behind the last rock which hid what she dreaded from her eyes.

Sick and faint from horror she climbed round at last and faced the dread.

There was no need to look twice; no life could exist in that crushed, mangled thing.

Helen cowered with her face to the sea, shuddering in every limb. She could not go nearer or touch that awful shapeless mass which had five minutes ago been handsome, living Jim Trevarthick.

The sun was touching the horizon line, a copper ball, the sea was growing an indigo tint; three hundred feet above her head rose up sheer the cliff. The gulls that had fled screaming from the rocks were flying back, reassured by the silence which had followed the startled woman's scream.

Helen collected her faculties; she must go to Trentham and tell them what had happened and send men to fetch that—thing. She crept past not daring to look again towards the body and hurried along the beach towards Trentham.

Poor Jim! She thought of him, jaunty, handsome, debonair, and now——. She shuddered and turned sick with the horror of it. He was dead, he had gone away; and she had indeed been fond of him, really liked him more than any other man she had seen in her life.

It was not pleasant walking on the beach, the round, blue-grey pebbles of every size rolled away under her high-heeled boots, and walking on the sharp-pointed rocks at the foot of the cliffs was worse. She had to go slowly and her thoughts turned on herself.

Would Gerald Vanburgh think it queer that she should be talking to Jim, poor Jim, on Cliff, two miles from Trentham? She knew he was particular about women; would it hurt her in his eyes? There would be an inquest and she would have to appear as a

"SHE PAUSED BEFORE SHE STEPPED FROM BEHIND THE LAST ROCK WHICH HID WHAT SHE DREADED FROM HER EYES" (*p.* 428).

witness, the principal witness. There would be much talk, and only three days ago she had heard him say how much he disliked the publicity given to women in these times. It would do her no good with him, and supposing Damaris were not engaged to him Helen believed she still had a chance.

But this might destroy it. How much easier it would be to return home and say nothing! If she were met, she could say she had been for a walk. The body would be found by fishermen and she would never be asked any questions. No one would dream of her having been with poor Jim. She had met no one in her walk from her uncle's house to Cliff.

But the memory of Jim with his bold black eyes brought a revulsion of feeling. She could not leave *that* to lie all night at the foot of the cliff, at the mercy of the sea. She must send fishermen from Trentham to fetch the shattered body.

Then again came thoughts of herself. She hesitated and looked back. He was dead: he could feel nothing. Why should she say anything about the accident? She was some distance from Cliff by now. The sun was almost gone and the evening was growing bitterly cold.

A boat out at sea drew nearer to the shore. Helen watched it eagerly. If it would only come near enough to Cliff to see that something was lying at the foot! Jim was wearing light clothes, poor Jim was fond of light clothes; they might see his body against the dark rocks.

Nearer came the boat; Helen in the shadow of a tall rock held her breath. If they would only come

near enough! But it was growing dusk; was it possible they would see? Yes! they must have caught sight of something for the boat was being brought in to the shore. One of the men sprang out; Helen in the dusk could barely see his figure, he went up to the foot of Cliff. His loud shout brought the other fisherman to him. Poor Jim was seen!

Helen sped homewards. She need say nothing now; the body was found and everyone would know that it was an accident.

A road led up from the beach before the village was in sight. Helen took this path; she met no one and her uncle's house was empty. Mr. Lemarcham was gone on his rounds, Mrs. Lemarcham was still with Mrs. Vickers, Damaris was not yet returned, and Sarah had taken the opportunity of the family's absence to run out for a gossip with a crony.

Helen reached her room unseen.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

"There must be stormy weather."

THREE or four fishermen were standing on the pier when the boat Helen had watched at Cliff drew in.

"You'm late, Bill."

"Have 'ee had a dacent haul?"

The elder man of the two in the boat held up his hand.

"There's a'been sad work to Cliff," he said; "Trevarthick's been and falled over; I've a'brought 'un back, poor chap."

Gruesome curiosity took the men to the boat's side.

"Light one o' they there lanterns," shouted one.

"He'll be pretty well smashed," said another.

Like wildfire the news ran up from the quay to the last cottage in the village street. Jim Trevarthick murdered, in bits, fallen from Cliff, had been brought to the pier in Bill Treleven's boat.

The women preparing their husbands' tea left their warm cottages and ran out into the bitter, frosty winter's evening. The men deserted the "Three Jolly Fisherboys" and hurried down to see what was going on.

Men, women, and children crowded out upon the pier, and gathered round the form that lay there covered by Treleven's coat. Pushing, hustling one another aside, chattering, wondering, the people stood in the winter's darkness. Two ship's lanterns threw a light on the faces of the crowd as they gazed with a horrible curiosity that was a mingling of excitement and pity at the form Treleven's coat covered.

Sarah with her friend had pushed their way to the very front of the people.

The virago, Mrs. Treleven, bent down and pulled away her husband's coat. A murmur of horror and pity rose from those nearest when the sight the coat had covered was exposed. Those behind craned their necks and pushed forward to see what had produced that groan of horror; some of the women began to cry.

"He'th a got summat in his hand," said one man.

Mrs. Treleven unclasped the fingers that were growing rigid in death and took from their hold a small gold band.

Sarah standing near saw the trinket.

"Why, 'tis Miss Damaris'es," she said in a loud surprised tone.

The words were caught up and echoed from the outskirts of the crowd.

"It belongs to doctor's darter."

"Her must a' given it to un."

"I seed her goin' up to Cliff at three o'clock," said a voice from the back.

"Who saith he seed her?"

A boy of twelve years old was hustled to the front. He said he had met her by the stile leading to the cliffs and she had crossed it.

A low murmur went through the crowd.

"Lads, her'th a pushed 'un over," said Mrs. Treleven in loud, strident tones.

"Her was frantic wi' jealousy."

"Us knows her must a met 'un on Cliff if her was goin' that way at three o'clock. Bill saith he couldn't a' been dead long when he picked 'un up."

The crowd muttered; Damaris' guilt was patent to their ignorant minds.

"What has happened?" said a clear voice.

Damaris herself stood amongst them.

The crowd parted on either side to give her a free passage. One or two women shrunk away from her as she passed. Sarah caught her hand and tried to stop her.

"Oh, don't 'ee look, Miss Damaris, don't 'ee look."

But Damaris pushed her on one side.

The men holding aloft the lanterns let their strong light fall on the shattered face of Jim Trevarthick and on Damaris. The crowd with eager, cruel eyes fixed on her waited for the supposed murderess to catch sight of her victim. Mrs. Treleven stood on one side, waiting with the small gold trinket clutched in her hand. Damaris reeled back and caught at Sarah's substantial shoulder to steady herself.

"Jim!" she gasped, "Jim!"

To an unbiassed mind that involuntary movement would have showed her innocence: to the Trentham fishermen it was a sure sign of conscious guilt. She was horrified at her work.

Mrs. Treleven looked round triumphantly.

"Sarah Kivell says this be yours," she said holding out the small gold hand.

"Her chain's broke," said a fisherman.

The long cloak that Damaris wore had fallen back from her shoulders, and the watch-chain from which poor Jim had wrenched the trinket was hanging with broken links from her waistband.

"He caught at it when her pushed 'un over," said Mrs. Treleven loudly.

This reasoning appealed to Trentham. There was the broken chain on Damaris, and there was the gold trinket taken from Trevarthick's dead hand.

"Sal, did her have it on her chain this morning?" asked one of the quicker wits.

But Sarah was frightened at the harm she had already done by saying the gold hand belonged to her mistress. She refused to say more.

Damaris, shuddering and clinging to Sarah, was unaware of what was passing round her. She could think only of that poor dead face.

"Has anyone told his mother?" she mastered her agitation enough to ask.

Yes, someone had gone to the poor mother.

"Why do you not take him away?" she said, looking round at the faces of the fishermen.

"Us wants to know whether this be yours?"

Mrs. Treleven thrust her red open hand before Damaris.

"Yes, that is mine," said Damaris, recognising the gold trinket on the woman's palm.

"You own 'tis yours?"

"Yes, certainly; I gave it to Mr. Trevarthick."

"Her owns her gave it 'un," was murmured among the crowd.

Damaris looked round her in surprise at the muttering fisher-folk: there was something in the air, something that had turned the good-tempered faces dark and lowering. On all sides she met frowning, threatening glances; the people had shrunk away from her, and she stood alone, facing Mrs. Treleven. Even Sarah had deserted her.

"Yes, I gave it to him," she repeated. "Let me pass," she continued quietly. "I must go home. I will send my father down to see—that."

"Not so fast, missus," said a burly fisherman, barring her path. "Us would like to know when you gave 'un that theer little gold hand.'

"Ay, us 'ud like to know."

With danger Damaris became her cool, collected self. She looked at the faces of the men about her: Treleven, Kivell, whose wives disliked her. Yes, Branton, Prouse, who always muttered as she passed them, and half-a-dozen others. Not one among them could she count upon for help, and she was standing at the end of the pier, with the crowd blocking her way to the quay.

Damaris knew that once their passions were aroused there was danger. The good-tempered, easy-going west-country folk were savage and cruel when in anger. There were cases known in Trentham of unpopular persons having been badly injured and roughly handled.

"Of what do you accuse me?" she asked steadily.

No one liked to answer. At last Treleven said—

"Us belave you pushed 'un over Cliff."

"I pushed Jim Trevarthick over Cliff!"

"In sure, us belave 'ee did."

"You must be mad!" she said contemptuously.

Her contempt stung them.

"Us knaw 'ee did. Ain't 'un a got your gold toy in his hand, and ain't 'ee got your chain broke where he caught it when he falled. You pushed 'un over."

Mrs. Treleven's voice sounded above the hoarse shouts of the crowd. They surged and heaved round Damaris. She remembered that policemen in Trentham never appeared until occasion for their services being required was over. Would anyone come to her help? She could not see across the harbour to the quay, the night was too dark; she could only see the faces of the crowd in the strong light of the one ship's lantern, still held by a fisherman.

The second had been placed by the ghastly body of poor Jim. Flickering shadows were cast on the stones of the pier; the water, black as pitch, lay between her and the blacker hills; the masts of the fishing-smacks were just visible against the night sky. The faces of the people pressed around her white and threatening, and the silent, quiet corpse of Jim seemed to become more quiet and more silent in contrast to the angry curses and mutterings of the people.

"Will you listen to me?" she asked.

"Ay, us'll listen to what 'ee have to say; lads, us'll listen to her," said Treleven.

"I met Jim Trevarthick on Cliff this afternoon."

"Us knawed that."

"He said he was going away to-morrow—going for ever: that he was not coming back to live."

Mrs. Treleven gave a coarse laugh of disbelief, and a voice in the crowd shouted—

"That's a likely story, ain't it?"

"He asked me to give him some little thing to keep, we were such old friends, and I gave him that gold hand. I went away, leaving him standing on Cliff; I walked over the moors, and round by the beach. I saw the crowd, and came to ask what had happened."

"'Tis all a lie!" said Mrs. Treleven loudly. "Us knawed 'ee was mad with jealousy when he went and took up with yer cousin. Lads, her met 'un on Cliff—her owns to't—and her pushed 'un over."

A murmur of assent answered Mrs. Treleven's words. The crowd pressed closer round Damaris, their faces grew more threatening. One man shook his fist in her face.

"Stand back!" she said. "If I killed him, I shall be tried for it."

Mrs. Treleven's voice drowned hers.

"'Tis a cruel shame! Look at Trevarthick; and he so ready wi' his joke and his money. 'Tis her that's done it: her that's held her nose in the air as though us warn't good enough for the likes of her. Look at her; her thinks her'll get off, but I can tell 'ee, miss, 'ee'll have to reckon wi' us. Trentham folk ain't so easily gammoned as 'ee thinks."

Damaris looked at the dark water on one side of her: there was no escape that way; on the other was the wall of the pier and the sea. Behind her was the sea, and before her the crowd. A saying came into her mind: "Between the devil and the deep sea."

"Let's duck her!" shouted someone.

Damaris started and shuddered at the words; surely they would not go so far as that.

"Ay, Jack's right: that's the way to sarve her."

"Let me pass," Damaris tried to say calmly and fearlessly, but her heart was beginning to throb with fear, and her voice was scarcely as steady as she wished it to be.

Mrs. Treleven seized her arm, but released it again when Damaris said, looking in her face—

"Do not touch me!"

She drew herself up and stepped forward.

"Let me pass," she repeated.

It seemed for the moment as though she were to be allowed to escape; they gave way before her, and she stepped into the midst of the crowd.

"Be 'ee a'goin' to let her off scot free?" yelled Mrs. Treleven.

Her voice roused the shrinking spirits. One man caught Damaris' cloak, another clutched at her arm, but she eluded the one, and the fastening of the cloak gave way and was left in the arms of the other.

She struggled through the yelling, cursing crowd; the darkness helped her, the lanterns were upon the ground, and cast no light upon the heads and faces of the people. They could not see, and for a moment she pushed her way unnoticed. But the lanterns were lifted and held aloft, and Damaris was visible. A fisherman caught her by the arms, but she pulled herself away, and diving under the arms of another man advancing to catch her, fled along the pier. The crowd, shouting, howling, gave chase. But Damaris, swift of foot, gained on them. They saw her escaping from their clutches, when she slipped and fell. A rope mooring a boat to the pier lay across her path; in the darkness she had caught her foot in it and fallen. She struggled up again, but her foot was strained; she limped along a few paces and the foremost men of the crowd were upon her. She set her lips with a resolve that nothing should make her scream; she would bear the worst they could do to her in silence, and turned and faced them.

Steps were running towards her from the opposite direction to the crowd.

"Am I in time? They have not touched you?"

Gerald Vanburgh's arm was round her and his voice was in her ear.

The crowd stopped short; the fisherman who was nearest Damaris shrank back.

"You brutes! what do you mean by this? Everyone of you shall answer for it."

"Her'th a'killed Jim Trevarthick!"

"Fools!"

"Us bain't fools and, her'th a'done it. Come on, lads; we won't be stopped by—fine gentlemen. Us'll duck her, as us said."

Damaris felt Vanburgh's fingers tighten round her wrist. She knew that whatever happened she was safe; he would never let anyone harm her.

"You cowards! Twenty men to duck one woman!"

Two of the men came forward—one was the brother of the young fisherman Vanburgh had thrashed—and attempted to seize Damaris. The taller and stronger of the two found himself on the stones of the pier with stars dancing before his eyes, and the second wisely desisted from the attempt and retired back into the crowd.

"Now, my men, you had better let us go quietly; unless you do I will turn every man out of his cottage and have the whole place pulled down. You women, take your husbands home, or you will regret it. Mrs. Treleven, you leave your cottage to-morrow if there is any more nonsense to-night. Do you hear?"

The fishermen and their wives felt a wave of cold apprehension drowning their souls and cooling their wild blood. To be turned from their cottages was a heavy price to pay for the pleasure of ducking a woman.

Some of the men detached themselves from the crowd, and tried to look as though curiosity alone had brought them there. The women began to cry and sob loudly.

"I thought that would bring you to your senses," said Vanburgh grimly. "Come, Miss Lemarcham, I will see you home."

"The—the body," she said, with a shiver; "where will they take him?"

Vanburgh beckoned to Treleven who approached with a hang-dog air.

"It is all right; I have settled with him," he said, after whispering a few words. "Hullo! Nixon, you are too late; everything is settled. I was in time; they had not touched Damar—Miss Lemarcham."

Harry Nixon was breathless; he was followed by some of the crew belonging to the *Wanderer*. Vanburgh sent them off with a few words and a douceur.

"See that things are managed decently, Nixon," he said, with a gesture in the direction where poor Jim lay. "I am going to take Miss Lemarcham home."

He had held her wrist the whole time, and he did not release it when they walked along the dark deserted quay.

The people had returned to the end of the pier, and were grouped once more round the mangled body. The lights cast reflections on their faces and on the black water. Damaris looked across at them from the quay and shuddered.

"They did not hurt you?" he asked, as she limped in her walk.

"No. I fell as I was running away, and hurt my foot."

"The savage brutes!" he muttered. "Does it hurt very much? Lean on me."

"I can get on very well, thank you," she said, and tried to draw her wrist from his clasp.

It tightened for a second, then he let her go.

The cottage doors were wide open as they passed up the village street. The peaceful interiors, with bright fires and tables laid for tea—in one a cat dozed on the hearth—were a contrast to the scene on the pier.

"How did you happen to come on the pier the minute you did?" said Damaris.

"I was at your house, and your servant brought the news of your danger. She is a good girl, Sarah is her name, is it not? I sent Nixon to find some of my crew at their lodgings and ran down to the pier."

"They would have had me a moment later. You were just in time."

"Thank God!"

The reverent thankfulness in his voice brought silence.

They were nearly at the top of the street; already the lights of the doctor's house shone from the windows upon their faces.

Vanburgh gave a strange sigh.

"Here is your father's house," he said. "I suppose we part?"

"Yes," she answered.

She left him at the door without a word, and he turned and walked down the street once more.

END OF CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

THE MULBERRY-TREE.

ITS trunk is all wrinkled,
Its leaves are all crinkled,
Its form is no longer delightful to see;
While rain-drops are flowing
And cold winds are blowing
Between the gnarled boughs of the Mulberry-tree.

Beneath its arms shady
Full many a lady,
Of wonderful beauty and noble degree,
Has dreamed of her lover;
While softly above her
There rustled the leaves of the Mulberry-tree.

And heroes, whose fighting
Was all for wrong's righting,
Have heard (like the king who made Philistines flee,
When bidden to dally
In Rephaim's valley)
The battle-cry sound in the Mulberry-tree.

Now past is its glory,
Forgotten its story,
Its name in the future must *Ichabod* be;
Its branches are twisted,
And winds, as they listed,
Have long made their sport of the Mulberry-tree.

Yet none shall despise it,
For highly I prize it:
No new-fangled shrubs in their beauty for me,
But rather the ruin
Of all that once grew in
The withered old heart of the Mulberry-tree!

ELLEN THORNEYCROFT FOWLER.

CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.—WHAT TO WEAR IN JUNE.

FROM OUR LONDON AND PARIS CORRESPONDENTS.

I.—FROM OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENT.

THE women who dress the best have generally only just the number of gowns that they actually require, exactly suited to the different occasions of their lives. This sounds an easy arrangement, but it means much forethought, much care, and continual mending and keeping in order.

A great deal may be done by re-arrangement, and present fashions lend themselves most kindly to the work of restoration. Bodices of different material from the skirt are much worn, as you may glean by the figure in our illustration (on the next page) holding up her trained skirt. This will put quite a new face on last year's garment, which may have rubbed in front or at the elbows ; and a judicious purchase of remnants at the annual sales will enable you often to have a really handsome piece of brocade, suited for a bodice, at the price of a plain fabric, and twice as durable.

Give attention to the figure to which I have just alluded, and you will see that the best portions of the old bodice might possibly be made useful for the fronts over the brocade. The skirt is quite plain save for a beaded galon at the hem, but the sides of the brocade, shaped in points, are bordered with a fringe of beads, costly to buy, and extremely easy to make. I speak with the assurance of experience, for I have made many. The beads are to be bought by the pound for very little, at most drapers'. Provide yourself with double coarse cotton and a long needle, place a good quantity of the beads in the lid of a card-board box. It is not at all necessary to apply the needle to each bead but, waved sideways among them, it takes up many at a time. This is easy work in the evening for women with poor eyesight. You begin at the tips with one bead through which the needle passes twice. Be careful to have exactly the same number of beads on each thread, if you want the strands to be equal, or if graduated see that the graduation is regular.

Sleeves are another most convenient feature in the present fashions. They may be of quite different materials and colour from the gown itself, and as they are generally the first to wear out this is an economy. For example, if you need a smart dress for occasions and have a black one by you, velveteen of a mousse green shade will make a fashionable sleeve, and revers of the same on the bodice, and a binding at the hem about two inches wide, will help to make it uniform.

It is in skirts that the great revolution in dressmaking has taken place this year. Foundations have been abolished, but this is no economy, for the material has to be lined ; and, moreover, in arranging a dress, the petticoat has to be thought of, for it shows when the dress is raised. Women of fashion have silk petticoats trimmed with a couple of pinked-out flounces, to accompany each new gown. This is an extravagance for ordinary folk, but care should be taken that the petticoat and skirt should either harmonise or contrast well in colour.

The cornet skirt for dresses is one most easily cut. If the width of the material will allow, it can be made in three pieces only : a cross-way seam down the back and on each side. The pocket is inserted in the right opening, the placket hole on the left. The width of the front piece at the hem is forty inches, sloping to twenty inches at the waist. The two back pieces measure across the hem twenty inches ; at the waist ten inches. But the edge is rounded and rests on the ground, and I am giving you the straight width at the hem in case you wish to have a short dress ; a long one is more the mode and then it is rounded below this. You will find that being so light, if you catch the material *low down* on the train between the finger and thumb it is quite easy to carry. I have given you the measurements for a medium size ; but remember that there is no fulness at the waist, where the skirt is fitted to each individual figure as carefully as a bodice.

I think the cornet is a decided improvement on the umbrella skirt. The latter was cut five yards six inches round. It was made quite plain at the waist by means of darts, but the fulness was all concentrated in the box pleats at the back.

The trimmings placed at the edge of the skirt are a matter for consideration. Either silk ribbon an inch wide having a satin edge pleated in close double pleats, is used in single and double rows, or bands of velvet, or ribbon edged with narrow bead galon, and for young girls narrow baby ribbon in three or four rows. Occasionally tucks are headed by rows of braid as in the other figure of the illustration. Here you see the bodice ends at the waist in a buckled belt, the trimming being horizontal bands of white braid on fawn woollen. The sleeve is made, as they mostly are, with one seam inside the arm, the material measuring eight inches round the wrist and twenty at the arm-hole, the fulness being gathered in a space of five inches, beginning in the front seven inches above the seam under the arm. It is width not height that is now aimed at. The other fashionable make of sleeve consists of one puff from the shoulder to the elbow, and there the fulness is gathered into a close fitting gauntlet piece to the wrist.

This make of sleeve is introduced into the Russian jacket, which, curiously enough, is also called the Watteau, and is perhaps more worn than any other. It is loose back and front, three-quarter length, with a Watteau pleat at the back, and has a turn-down collar; a bow of ribbon falls the entire length in front. In serge this is a singularly useful and inexpensive garment. Good serge double width can be had quite inexpensively, and three yards would be ample. Patterns of this jacket can be had from any depôt where such things are sold. No trimming is necessary.

The bodice in our initial letter is most simple, all round in the basque, and well suited for woollen stuffs. Cottons are mostly made with full bodices, back and front brought down in a slight point, and bordered with a fold of ribbon velvet or plain ribbon, a couple of loops and ends falling on the cross-cut back seam of the plain skirt. For linens, zephyrs, and any cotton with firmness of texture, no lining is necessary, and there should be no undue length of skirt. The new puckered muslins, which are so pretty and are sold in such charming shades, the tape-like white stripes being divided by puckered blue, pink, or fawn material, need a light lining of thick muslin. As these materials stretch in equal proportions they will wash together. The hats this summer are easily trimmed. They are generally quite flat and are either well covered with flowers, or display merely a wreath, the crown being replaced by a large bow of ribbon and ostrich tips, and osprey or stiff wings. A small outlay only is necessary.

Leather belts of the ordinary kinds, with leather buckles as wide as those worn by a groom, are the mode, and glacé kid and crocodile leather, cut like a Swiss belt, are laced up the front. Elastic metal, oxidised silver principally, have handsome *repoussé* ornaments in front. We all know that a belt well drawn in is a most becoming adjunct to a good figure.

II.—FROM OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.

"WE only learn between whiles, we are forgetting all day long," says one of our greatest writers, and we do well nowadays to forget last year's modes quickly, they are so completely set aside. But the Paris modes differ greatly from the English ones. On your side of the Channel you have abjured drapery and dress foundations, while many of the good gowns here have both. Our picture (page 436) shows a simple arrangement of skirt which is cut with the width of the material, so that there is but one join, and that is no join at all. Forgive the bull though I am not Irish, for there are Irish bulls and bulls not Irish. One end of the fabric is drawn over the other, caught up at the side a little shorter than the rest, giving a graceful flow. This is a Princess dress or feigns to be one, the union of skirt and bodice being hidden by a band of green ribbon, tied in a bow at the side. The sleeves come to the elbow, and a double frill of lace surrounds the shoulders. This style commends itself to those who desire to combine a day and morning dress; for a movable habit shirt of dress material with a high collar suffices beneath the lace, and when that is not worn the gown is half high.

I have been over in England of late, and I was really horrified to see the grotesque aspect presented by English women of every size and form adopting the skirts cut to the shape at the waist. This is all very well for the slim, but it is anything but *comme il faut* in the case of most matrons, who have passed their climacteric. We in Paris get over the difficulty by hip trimmings, which have the aspect of side basques. In the picture this is brought about by two deep loops of green ribbon, continued in a green stripe under the arms. This effectually softens the outlines. Passementerie trimmings mixed with fine gold threads are arranged for the same purpose of combined concealment and adornment. Their form is ladder-like, and they end in fringe. Fringe is used on mantles and dresses generally in plain strands. There is certainly

"DAMP GRASS."

a disposition to have dresses fastened at the back, the skirts and bodices being in one. If buttoned with fairly large buttons the wearer can possibly fasten her own dress, otherwise it is a fashion to be avoided. What can be more undesirable than to be at the mercy of someone else every time you dress?

Checked materials are combined with plain ones in the same dress, as you will see in the accompanying figure. The model was yellow and grey with the new make of sleeves, and the pretty under-vest has rows of gold braid matching the rest of the trimming.

There is quite a passion for gold in the French capital, and the leading houses are using gauzes made of gold thread, and gauze embroidered in silks and jet. Vests and cuffs are often made of thick gold cloth, like the stitch called "couching" in art embroidery.

As soon as the sunshine took possession of Paris I began to see on all sides the most delightful green-tinted gowns of the lime shade and other light tones. Green in every variety has been best worn up to the present. The sun brought out the parasols also. The handles to be quite *en règle*, must be grotesque. A silver fox is seen emerging through a natural wood stick, sometimes cut from Scotch fir. Three faces, types of races, appear on another, or quaint gnomes, squirrels—everything, in fact, calculated to spoil your gloves. Either striped moiré covers the ribs, or crépon and chiffons are flounced and frilled till they look like whipped and pink-tinted cream. Rows of baby ribbon and rosettes of ribbon border the edges, and cascades of lace are used for trimming. This offers an easy mode of re-trimming last year's purchases, for the shapes are not altered in any noticeable degree; though for those who like something totally uncommon, there is the *flot de mer*, which is undulating as its name suggests.

IN THE PARK.

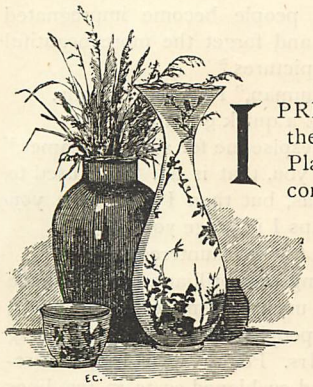
Many easily made and most useful capes are sold to match one dress or to be suitable with many. They seldom reach below the waist. Some are cut like three petals, the centre the longest; the point falling over the shoulder, the two sets opening back and front. Each of these six petals is piped. Another form is a straight piece of material just long enough to cover the waist, and sufficiently long to be single pleated into the neck, where it is finished off with loops of ribbon standing upwards—the loops satin, two inches wide. Another is after the François Ier type, which the monarch wore slung from the shoulders. Women could hardly follow that plan exactly, but the cape does not meet in front, it is merely sufficiently brought forward to show itself and display a lace-trimmed vest. These capes are generally made of a thin velvet trimmed with jet, and bordered with silk guipure.

Guipure lace seems to be an almost ubiquitous trimming, and there is a decided preference given for Irish patterns. It is used much as pelerines on bodices, a revival of the quaint, formal, and not over-pretty mode of 1830. If you want to trim a bodice in that way, let me tell you it will need for each side one yard and twenty-four inches of lace about six inches deep. Fold this to a depth of less than two inches at the back of the waist, and for some twelve inches it is quite plain; then it is gradually allowed to widen to its fullest extent, and a yard of it is to be gathered and fall full over the shoulders, the rest narrowing into the waist-band in front. I can remember pictures of the Royal Family arrayed in dresses of this make in England, and some of the French ladies of the same date accepted these modes with reluctance; now all such styles emanate from France.

American fashions have found great favour with us in Paris for children. The little frocks of satin and silk lined and fully gathered from a yoke, accompanied by a cape or not as occasion requires, are generally worn out of doors with the American bonnets, shaped something like a Quaker cap, close and nestling softly to the pretty faces. Let me recommend English mothers to adopt them, too, for they are easily made at home, and children of all figures look well in them.

MANAGED AT RAMSGATE.

A STORY IN ONE CHAPTER.



I PRIDE myself in being the typical "old maid." Plain—exceedingly; my complexion, from long exposure to all weathers, has taken a ruddy hue and hard texture; my eyes, in their strong, healthy expression, assure you my energy is inexhaustible, and if I am not mistaken, I see in their keen outlook an index to that kindliness of heart, that heaven so often bestows on the childless woman, to induce the young confidants to repose in the sympathy of what would otherwise be a lonely, a very lonely personality.

And so it is that I am the recipient of terrible love tragedies, and pale, pathetic agonies of unrequited affections. There was that clever, handsome fellow Peter Meringen, with his absurd fascination for that empty-headed widow of Colonel somebody-or-other, who ought to have known better, and my darling Ruth Willard. But it is all about this charming couple that I want to tell you.

The dear child had been growing paler and thinner for some time, and I assured her parents she must go away for a little change of scene and air, and diversion of thought. They protested it was only over-work; her district and night-schools, etc. etc., must be given up.

But you see I was in possession of her secret, and so I held out, and at last gained their consent to take her for some weeks to Ramsgate.

It was April when we started, and I did not mean to return till the Whitsuntide Bank holiday-makers drove us from the place. She had never been to Ramsgate, and she had only a very vague idea of the nature of the place; and that was partly why I took her there, because I never consider anyone's education is complete until they become acquainted with that branch of the community that one meets in all its best amiability on the Ramsgate sands. Then the air is superb, I know none to equal it; my energy in that climate is always quite stupendous, and my appetite, if I may be pardoned the vulgar allusion, is unappeasable.

So we went down with our books, and our sketching blocks, and (must I confess it? It is almost an acknowledgment of the cats and the fads, but my one weakness was *knitting*) we spent our mornings on the sands, occupying one of the quaint old Mrs. Sarah Penny's red-cushioned seats. At first we had it almost to ourselves, and Ruth would sit for hours, her hands folded on the open book on her lap, and her sweet hazel eyes fixed on the white sails of the pretty sailing boats on the horizon. There was something strange about the girl's silence, it would often carry me back to my young days when I used to wait and watch for the bonnie lad coming so surely across the seas to fetch his sailor bride. I could catch at times the very echo of his bright, breezy voice:

"Oh! Nancy, my winsome lass, you know you are the ugliest little girl a man ever chose to make his wife. It's all that fine bit of courage in your eyes, and that glorious smile on your face that holds me captive."

And then I would tighten my breath, for I felt his passionate kisses once more on the eyes that he had loved, and the lips that had known how to smile for him; and a queer sensation in my throat would make me blow my nose violently, and cough hysterically.

"Dear aunty!" Ruth would cry in consternation, "you are catching a frightful cold, we have been sitting too long."

And at those moments she was always the stronger of the two, and would pick up my knitting basket and the books, and carry me off.

In the afternoons we always took long walks, over the cliff to Broadstairs, or across country to St. Peter's, or some other spot of old Kent historic interest. And in the evenings I used to play to her (for I found her own superior performance only drove her deeper into painful reflections) vigorous old Scottish airs, and English ballads.

So the days went by, and each bright increase of sunshine brought more little children on the sands, and sportive mamas and papas. Whole families would go for donkey rides, and Ramsgate fast became its renowned character.

Ruth looked on at first in disturbed dismay, but soon she became as much absorbed in watching the different groups as I was; until at last I saw my time had come, and I seized the opportunity one evening when we were pacing the cliff in a soft mellow sunset, to say to her:

"Ruth, my dear, there are times when it is positively necessary for women to step in and arrange their own affairs."

"Dear aunty, what can you mean?"

"Why, my love, you have got to make it your business to marry Peter Meringen—you have got to save him from a foolish entanglement, and help him to repossess himself."

"Don't, oh, please don't."

"Yes, I must. I want you to feel your affection for that stupid boy is positively *selfish*."

"He is not stupid," she fired, "my father always speaks of him as a man of powerful intellect."

"That is quite true, but he is allowing his intellect to run to seed while he is dangling after that atrocious woman."

"Oh, aunty, she is so beautiful!"

"I never admire vanity—and don't interrupt me; what I want you do is this: consent to my asking him to run down here for a week, and make yourself as charming and as forgiving as you possibly can."

"You ask me to do an impossibility," she answered, with a show of pride I immensely admired. "I have nothing to forgive—there was never an engagement between us, and I—I possibly misunderstood his attentions—perhaps I knew him too intimately, and thought he meant more than he intended. *But as to throwing myself at his feet now!*"

"I want you to do nothing of the kind, I merely ask you to hold out a stronger hand to him, to save him from this woman's snares; or, at any rate, to help me to bring him into a new atmosphere."

"That I will willingly do," and suddenly she caught my hand and pressed it to her lips.

He turned up the following week, and we soon got over the nervousness of the meeting. Ruth was by far the most composed of the three, and took the lead in all the conversations. We walked on the cliff after dinner, and he exclaimed once or twice at the beauty of the sea-view.

"But," he added, "what on earth brought you here? Why could not you go to Broadstairs, or to some other decent spot? *Ramsgate!* But I suppose you have got the place pretty well to yourselves at present."

"You will see to-morrow," we answered with a mutual twinkle. He looked from one to the other a little piqued.

"I do so much detest the cockney holiday-makers, they are replete with vulgarity and devoid of all humour."

"I don't agree with you, Peter," I answered, "I think there is nothing so amusing, or so charming to contemplate, than people who can thoroughly throw themselves into the powers of enjoyment. You æsthetic folk with your superb sensibilities enjoy absolutely nothing."

"You make a great mistake, the present moment is one of keen pleasure; one's surroundings are all in harmony."

I thought he dwelt a little lingeringly on the tall, graceful figure of the girl at his side. Her head was slightly turned from him, but he must have caught the perfect curve of her profile, and fine, full throat.

"But one's harmonious surroundings are few and far between," she said suddenly.

"That is generally one's own fault."

"Not if one lives in consideration of others, one has no choice."

"That is your mistake, you are not using your power. If you know the fitness of things it is your highest duty to impart it to others."

"But so many things have combined to give one artistic tastes, it is not possible by one stroke to impart them to others."

"But you would naturally be moving in circles that had got the same influences."

"Oh, how shockingly incrusted you are in class bias, Peter!"

I cried, "Life would be torture to me if I had to walk in one exquisite groove, where people think the same thoughts, and smell the same sickly lilies. There is an unhealthy, demoralising atmosphere about this movement, people become impregnated with impossible ideals, and forget the more beautiful types of nature's living pictures."

"And the cry of the human," Ruth said quietly.

He turned to her with a quick gesture.

"Miss Willard, you despise me for an idle dreamer."

"I don't understand you, that is all. You used to have very different ideas, but then I have seen you so seldom of late, perhaps I ill-judge you."

He made no answer, and we sauntered back.

The following morning was brilliant, it might have been a June day. As usual we made for the sands, but we were later and people were already gathering in large numbers. Mrs. Penny with bright foresight had spread her red-cushioned seats in two lines along the sands, and the whole scene, if one could have eclipsed the broad, sparkling sea, exactly resembled a large tea-treat at Kew. Peter's face was a study for Dickens. I thoroughly enjoyed his discomfort.

"Come along," I cried, "we will secure that seat at the end, then we shan't be deafened by the town band and the niggers."

He bent gracefully, and asked, "By what did you say?"

"The town band and the niggers."

He threw himself desperately into a seat.

"Fine morning, sir; one penny for your seat if you please, hope you mean to stay, sir; lots of company a-coming in by the midday express; four families as comes regular and always sits with me; thank you, sir; like a chair for your feet miss, you're getting quite sunburnt, and it be becoming. Shall I lodge your sunshade for you, ma'am?"

"That is Mrs. Sarah Penny," I said, as the old lady moved away to fresh customers.

"Indeed!"

His eyes were fixed on the figure of a stout paterfamilias in a long black coat and tall hat, tossing his little three-year-old to a rollicking Whitechapel ditty.

Peter shuddered slightly, and looked carefully round at the strange company.

"Oh, Ruth," I cried, "there is our dear old peppermint man! Peter, dear, would you go and buy us some of those large brown balls?"

He put up his glass.

"Where is he?"

"There, look! a man with long curls and a white apron, holding out a tray. Mind you get the right sort, they are 'four-a-penny, home-made.'"

Peter groaned.

"You *are* naughty!" Ruth laughed, as the boy actually went off. "Are you not going too far?"

"My dear, this will be the making of him."

"Do you mean to consume them now?" he asked, returning with a paper bag.

"Yes. Why?"

"Because, whilst you are so agreeably entertained, I thought perhaps you would excuse my taking a stroll somewhere, over the cliff, *anywhere*, to smoke a cigar."

"Go, by all means. Ruth, love, a turn would do you good, too."

"Would you come?" There was a gleam in his eyes as she rose and joined him with a smile.

We did not try the experiment of the sands again; but as the days slipped by, and as Ruth's powers of energy increased (and mine diminished), I was quite content to sit by myself on the cliffs, or the unfrequented pier, and consider what a very clever woman I was.

Peter was a beautiful reader, and he would often give us hours of poetic delight; he had, too, a good, accurate memory, and his recitations were a treat—except when he sentimentalised off into Swinburne's extravagances, and then my irritable cough always disturbed the flow of his ideas. Once, though, when he paused after these words—

> "In the world of dreams I have chosen my part,
> To sleep for a season and hear no word
> Of true love's truth or of light love's art,
> Only the song of a secret bird,"

with a plaintive vibration in his voice, I stretched out my hand to him, and my eyes were a little moist.

"It is not an easy thing, Peter, to take up one's life again where one broke it off."

He kept my wrinkled old hand in his in a close pressure.

"No; it is not easy when one has marred and disfigured it, and has forfeited the respect one prized the most."

"Forfeited, but not lost."

"Don't you draw rather a fine distinction?"

"What do you think, Ruth?"

"I think there is a *wide* distinction," she said slowly; "respect that has been forfeited can surely be restored; a respect that is lost is beyond recall."

"On what does the restoration depend?" he asked, fixing her with his brilliant dark eyes.

"On the penitence of the offender," I suggested, for I saw it was painful for her to answer.

"No," she said quickly, "that savours of unmanliness, aunty; it would be enough for me that the offender should acknowledge he has missed his mark."

"Made a profound ass of himself, you mean," he said, getting up and stepping out on the balcony; "my word, it is a diabolical sensation. Halloo! why on earth is she turning up here?"

An open carriage was drawing up to the hotel door; I peered over his shoulder, and to my intense consternation beheld the widow of Colonel somebody-or-other (never can remember the man's name) and her pretty child. She *was* beautiful—undeniably—and as she bowed to Peter with a lovely dignity, and a magnificent large gaze from a wonderful pair of eyes, I felt at any rate the boy had shown good taste in his foolishness. I looked in his face and started at its stern coldness. "She is very beautiful," I said, "as beautiful as a Bermudas lily."

"Which is scentless," he answered. We looked both of us instinctively for Ruth, but she had left the room.

"Oh, my dear!" he cried passionately, laying his hands heavily on my shoulders. "Listen to me. I have no mother or sister—you are both to me. Listen, tell me how I am to bear it; I have been such an arrant fool. This hateful woman infatuated me; I could not breathe away from her atmosphere; she opened a new ideal to me—a more perfect type, as I supposed; and I shut my heart to the love that was burning there all the time—all the time. 'I hid my heart in a nest of roses,' and the fragrance consumed me. But they are faded, and I am sick of the scent, and have fled from the noxious perfume. Where? Back to the first, pure type of spotless beauty—Ruth! Ruth! But how dare I speak to her? What a fool I have been to come! I shall go back to-morrow."

He was pacing the room now; I knew just the stage of his tragedy, poor boy! it had been rehearsed to me so often before.

"No, you must not go back," I said, "not before you have spoken, and you must do it at once, Peter, or you will not win her."

I left him and went straight to my child.

"Aunty," she cried, as I entered her room, "you will let me return, won't you? I must go away at once."

"Very well, my love, but you must not agitate yourself. We will go directly you wish. But come, dress yourself for dinner, dearest; we must meet these people this evening."

The beauty joined us as we stood on the terrace in the moonlight. She was radiant and sparkling, Ruth cold and silent, Peter negative.

"It serves you right, Mr. Meringen," she laughed, in a silvery language that lay behind the actual words, "you deserve to be found out. You went off in such a fog of mystery. All London is discussing you."

"How very gratifying!"

"Don't be so cynical! It is too cruel a weapon; don't you think so, Miss Willard? And don't you despise fickleness in men?"

"I despise it in anyone," she answered coldly. "I hope you are not accusing Mr. Meringen. Do you know," she said, turning to him, "we are returning home to-morrow?"

"To-morrow?" he echoed in pained surprise, "surely it is a hasty decision?"

"No," I said quickly, for I had caught the triumphant curl of the beauty's lips; "Ruth and I ought to have told you we intend to leave directly now. Ramsgate is getting oppressively full, and she is anxious to return to her work."

"Ah! you are one of those delightful people who are always doing good. I wish I were like you!" with a pretty little sigh, and a fascinating droop of the beautiful head. But Peter's eyes were still fixed on Ruth's pale face.

"Are you strong enough yet to take up your work?"

"Oh, yes, quite, thank you. I shall be glad to be back now."

"And what are you going to do?" the beauty asked.

"I, too, shall return to work."

She put her hands to her ears with a last fascinating appeal.

"How insufferable you will be! I can see already the worn fold on your brow, and the exhausting

unrepose in your eyes. Bah! you will be lost to society, and I wash my hands of you."

He laughed, a careless, amused laugh, and took Ruth's shawl boldly from her arm, and wrapped it round her shoulders.

"It is getting abominably chilly," the beauty shivered prettily. "I shall wish you all good-night," and with a wave of her hand she went indoors.

We woke the next morning to a terrific gale, and it was impossible to attempt to return to London that day. The time dragged heavily on our hands. Ruth was cold and passive, and sat with her head bent over her book the whole morning. Peter did the desponding lover; and I grew nervous as the clock ticked on and nobody spoke, and finally became irritable to a degree.

"Why don't you go and see the sea?" I suggested snappishly. "It will be worth looking at."

He jumped up.

"Happy thought," he said, and left the room.

By and by I proposed we should follow.

"We needn't seek him," I said, "since you seem to be so bored with his society."

She gave me a quick, pained glance and said nothing.

It was a difficulty to keep one's balance, but we made for the sands, where we saw a crowd quickly gathering. Our conjecture was right; a fishing-boat was tossing helplessly in the midst of the raging sea, and all hands refused to attempt a toss-up rescue.

"But it *must* and *shall* be made," a strong voice rang out above the hurricane. And every atom of colour left Ruth's face.

"Five pounds down to any man who'll give me his boat, and another five if I return."

"Done!" cried a gruff sailor voice.

Ruth had left my side. I saw her slip like an electric flash through the crowd, and in an instant she was standing close to Peter.

"If you go, I go too."

"*No!*"

She threw off her jacket and bared her arms, and smiled scornfully into his face.

"PETER SHUDDERED SLIGHTLY, AND LOOKED CAREFULLY ROUND AT THE STRANGE COMPANY" (*p.* 438.)

"You think I can't pull? Try me, you've no right to stop me."

She laid her hands on the slanting boat and looked him full in the eyes.

"Ruth! aunty, stop her!"

"Never, Peter!" I cried, "your life and hers are one, they must be lived or *given* together."

A wild blush flooded her face and throat, and I saw him grasp the strong, white hand for one passionate moment. The next they were carried on the bosom of an awful wave in the cheers of the excited crowd.

In spite of my mad effort I could not follow them. I only knew the cheers deepened till they rose to a roar that mingled with the sea and the wind, and then I dropped on my knees and buried my face in the sand. Such a little while, but what an eternity to me! and I raised my head to see the boat actually returning, actually within reach of the hands that rushed to haul her in.

"All saved!"

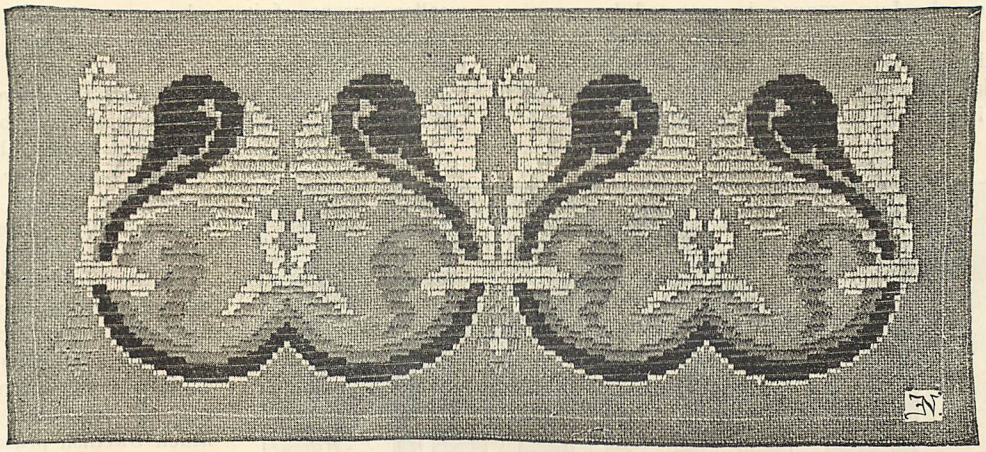
It was Peter's voice. I saw him hurry up the sands with Ruth in his arms. She had fainted, but not until the last stroke was rendered. Proudly he bore her through the cheering eager crowd to the carriage someone had rushed to get. She came to long before we reached the hotel, without a single shiver.

"My darlings!" I sobbed, "my splendid, heroic darlings! this is the proudest day of all my life!"

Peter had taken possession of her hands and was pressing them to his lips. I saw their long, long look into each other's eyes, and I knew without a doubt "I had managed it."

LILIAN STREET.

SWEDISH EMBROIDERY.



SWEDISH EMBROIDERY IN WOOL ON JAVA CANVAS (A).

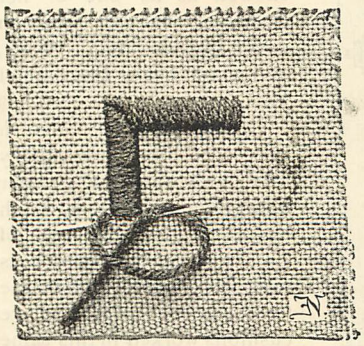


FIG. 1.

IN the illustrations before us we have some excellent specimens of Swedish embroidery, showing both that done in cotton on linen as well as the woollen work on woollen Java canvas.

The latter (Figs. A and C) is the original Swedish, and more characteristic than the former. The modern arabesque strip before us is of ochre-coloured Java canvas, the colours of woollen yarn—something between Berlin wool and crewel wool—being sage green, dark red, a very dull blue, and black, the lighter portions, centre and outer edge, being worked in yellow and white filoselle silk, the whole being extremely effective and the colouring most harmonious. The woollen canvas is expensive, but it is so wide that the width is sufficiently long

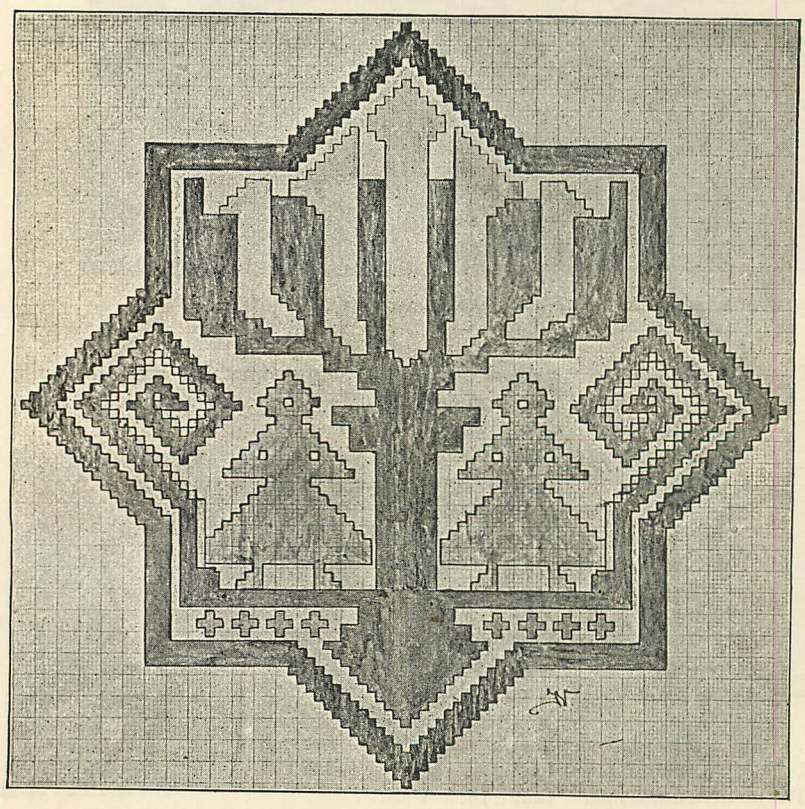
FIG. 2.

SWEDISH EMBROIDERY IN COTTON ON LINEN (B).

to form a mantel border, nine inches being sufficient length required for the purpose. This work, when done on the Java canvas, is executed by counting the threads, but it can also be worked by those who dislike counting by tracing a design on the material, following the outline with thick silk, and filling in the pattern with long stitches.

On the coarse Swedish homespun this embroidery looks remarkably well. Peasants make their large woollen aprons of it, and you continually see the quaintest figures embroidered in many colours, having a most artistic effect.

In many Swedish peasant homes the carved wood chairs are used as they are upon week-days, but when a festival comes, the large wooden boxes they always possess are opened, and the most richly embroidered cushion slips are withdrawn. At Mlle. Nörregard's studio we noticed one remarkably handsome "slip" worked in art shades on peacock-blue cloth. It was intended for slipping over the cushion which Swedish peasants use for laying on the wooden benches. Mlle. Nörregard showed us as one of her treasures another cushion cover intended for a bench, and which bears the date of 1685.



SWEDISH EMBROIDERY IN WOOL ON JAVA CANVAS (C).

In fashionable Swedish houses cushions are equally used, only there they prefer a large square cushion, which has been given the name of La Favorite, and which is used for lying on before the fire. Many people have cushions worked in this same manner, and several yards long.

Now as to the method of working; you should obtain canvas needles with blunt

points, and use the wool specially intended for this work, and which costs threepence a skein. If you will study the figures given you cannot fail to learn the work, which is extremely simple.

No. 1 is the common stitch, used in all Swedish work.

No. 2 shows you how to work up a slope.

No. 3 is much recommended to those who do not like counting stitches.

Trace your pattern on the material, the outline, as we have before said, being worked in filoselle, only four threads being used, and the centre being filled up with yarn. If you use twisted silk, use the whole thread, the widest woollen stitches taking four threads of the canvas.

Another way of working on Swedish homespun is to lay plain white canvas over the material, and then to work your pattern in cross-stitch, afterwards cutting the canvas and drawing out the threads, leaving the pattern worked on the material. This is very simple, but it resembles Russian work more than Swedish, excepting as far as material and wool are concerned.

This work answers for many things besides cushions; and were my readers to visit Mlle. Nörregard's studio, they would see for themselves how many of her charming designs—for they are all original—can be adapted to portières, friezes, etc. etc.

In Fig. B we see a beautiful design. This is an embroidered towel, which could be used as a chair-back, etc. This is embroidered in *reprisé* cotton, six or seven threads being used at a time. The stitches are the same as those used in woollen work, and the material being Java linen, homespun.

In the piece before us the pattern is worked in two shades of blue and one shade of red cotton. The small crosses are alternately blue and red between lines of the palest blue, the creatures—for we will not classify them on natural history lines—being in dark blue and red. The whole is extremely handsome. Many things can be done in this work, and it washes most beautifully, which is a great advantage, particularly to all who live in towns.

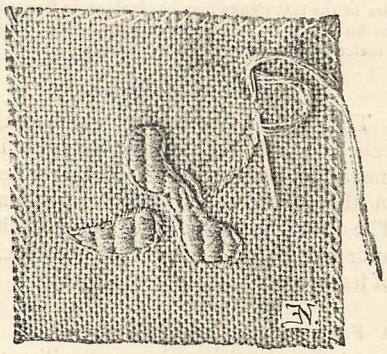


FIG. 3.

We should recommend our readers to work this pattern on a bed-spread as a border. It would be also very pretty as both ends of a tea-cloth, so many now being made long and narrow, just to be thrown across a table, although the latter may be round.

THE YEAR'S JEWELS.

BY M. C. GILLINGTON.

AGATE: JUNE.

Long life, health, and prosperity.

By shadowy valleys deep in hay
The brown brook went:
It laughed and whispered on its way,
In sweet content:
"The summer-flood at full-tide stands
In all the happy meadow-lands!"

It sang in passing by, to greet
With word of love,
The fairy towers of meadow-sweet,
Dim-poised above.
"More hopes fulfilled, more dreams made true,
For me, O blossoms, and for you!"

It cooed among the waterweeds
Along the night,
It murmured to the darkling reeds
That crossed the light;
"O clover-fields, O leas new-mown,
O endless beauty yet unknown!"

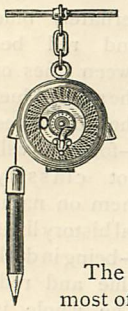
The clear brown dusk enwrapped it close,
The brown boughs spread
Their tangled weft of leaf and rose
Low o'er its bed.
"O birds and buds, O wood and lane,
The Golden Age returns again!"

THE GATHERER:

AN ILLUSTRATED RECORD OF INVENTION, DISCOVERY, LITERATURE, AND SCIENCE.

Correspondents are requested, when applying to the Editor for the names and addresses of the persons from whom further particulars respecting the articles in the GATHERER may be obtained, to forward a stamped and addressed envelope for reply, and in the case of inventors submitting specimens for notice, to prepay the carriage. The Editor cannot in any case guarantee absolute certainty of information, nor can he pledge himself to notice every article or work submitted.

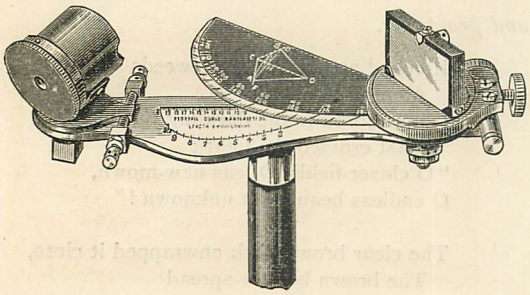
A Pencil Suspender.



The little device for suspending pencils which we illustrate herewith is meant to be worn as a locket either in the dress or on the watch-chain. The pencil is hung by a cord, which, after being drawn out for use, flies back of its own accord like a spring tape.

A Face in the Milky Way.

The broad face in the moon is familiar to most of us, and several astronomers have fancied they could see other faces in portions of the lunar surface magnified in the telescope. Dominic Cassini, Astronomer to Louis XIV., for example, discovered the profile of a beautiful woman with flowing hair in Cape Heraclides on the Mare Imbrium; while, curious to tell, Schroeter, another observer, found the likeness of an ugly man in the same spot. A photograph of the Sagittarius region of the Milky Way, by Mr. Barnard, contains within the white circle a shadowy visage, which the observer is requested to discover for himself. It is something of the Dickens type, and in more classical and superstitious days it might have been regarded as the apotheosis of the illustrious novelist. The eyes are formed by two dark areas with whiter specks, and the lock of hair on the right hand by a stream of stars. The face is recognisable in other photographs of this region.

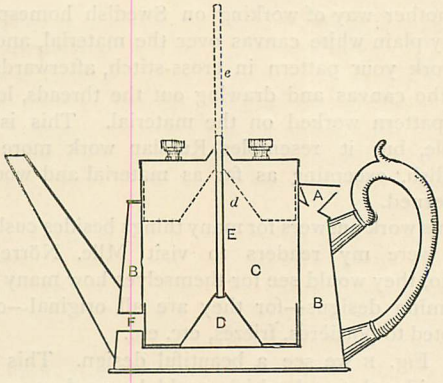


A New Curve-Ranger.

The apparatus which we illustrate is an adjunct to the surveyor's outfit, intended for ranging the curves of roads, railways, and so on. It is based on the principle of the twenty-one propositions in the Third Book of Euclid: namely, that the angle in the segment of a circle is constant. We need not enter into the details of the instrument, especially as they are somewhat technical; but we may add that the only adjustment it requires is the setting of the eye-piece.

An Anti-Tannin Teapot.

Tea without tannin is a widely felt want, but one that is not easily provided for, as many of us know to our cost. A new teapot has just been devised to supply this need, and it is illustrated in our diagram,

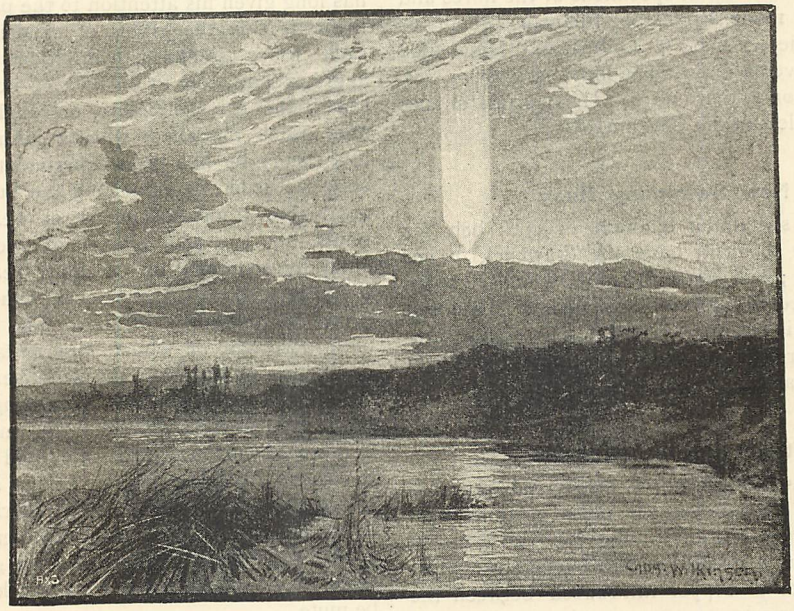


which shows a section through one of the new utensils. It will be seen that the new teapot consists of two cylinders, one enclosing the other. In the inner, C, there fits a fine strainer-cage, D, which is raised or lowered by means of a rod, E, passing through the lid. Into this strainer the tea is put without any water. Boiling water is first poured into the outer cylinder, B, by means of the little orifice, A, just against the handle, and the strainer-cage being then lowered to the bottom of the cylinder, the heat communicated to the tea from the outer cylinder causes the leaves to open, and thus facilitate a speedy and complete infusion. Two or three minutes will serve to effect this, and then the inner cylinder may be filled with boiling water. A further three or four minutes will complete the infusion, and the strainer-cage, carrying the tea-leaves, should then be drawn up into the lid of the teapot to the position indicated by the dotted lines and the letters *d*, *e*, by means of the rod. The result should be a supply of good tea, passing to the spout, F, free alike of tea-leaves and tannin.

A New African Fibre.

Attention has been called in the March number of the *Kew Bulletin* to a new source of fibre from West Tropical Africa. This fibre is obtained from the young pinnæ or leaflets of the African Oil Palm (*Elæis guineensis*). Scarcely anything has hitherto been known out of the Colony concerning it, though it is extensively used locally for making fishing-lines and for other purposes where great strength and durability are required. Though the fibre as prepared by the natives

is very fine and strong, it is extracted in such a laborious and tedious manner as to prohibit its coming into European commerce. A well-known firm of fibre brokers say that it has occasionally come into their hands in very small samples for the last fifteen years, too small indeed to make any experiments, and though it has been stated by spinners to be too hard and gritty to spin readily, they are inclined to think this view might be modified with sufficient material to test it practically; and if really spinnable it would realise perhaps from £50 to £60 per ton in London. The Assistant Colonial Secretary at Lagos, however, says that a hard day's work is counted well-spent on the production of six ounces of fibre from thirty-six pounds of the raw material. Estimating the value of labour to the native at not more than threepence a day, and leaving out of consideration the time expended in collecting and sorting the leaves in the forest, the actual cost of this material to the producer cannot be calculated at less than £75 per ton.



THE SUN PILLAR.

The Sun Pillar.

The sun pillar is a vertical beam of light rising from the rim of the sun as it is setting or rising. It has usually a pointed end, which is sometimes uppermost and sometimes lowermost, as in the display represented in the figure, which was observed by Miss Annie Ley, of Lutterworth, on March 5th last. The sun was setting at the time and the disc was partially hidden behind a cloud-bank. The column of light was very brilliant, especially near the sun. It rose to an elevation of some 5°, and was about the same width as the solar disc. The point rested on the upper rim of the disc, and was of an orange-red colour, which merged into the yellow-white of the pillar. The effect lasted some minutes after the sun sank out of sight, then gradually died out. The cause of the phenomenon is not well understood by meteorologists; but some think it is part of a halo round the sun. Its resemblance to an obelisk in shape is perhaps more than accidental, as we know that obelisks were extremely numerous at the city of On, or Heliopolis, in Egypt, which was dedicated to the worship of the sun.

A Gas Blender.

The device illustrated herewith is intended to augment the illuminating power of a gas flame, and is a small disc of tin fixed to the burner as shown in Fig. 1. It

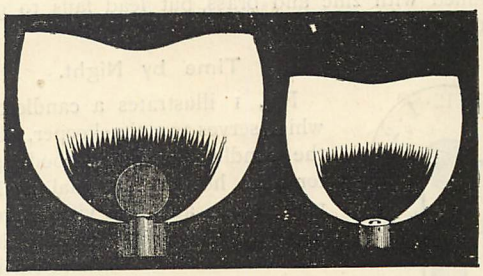


FIG. 1. FIG. 2.

assists the mixture of air with the gas and also heats the latter, producing thereby a greater spread and brilliancy in the flame. Fig. 2 represents the jet from an ordinary Bray's union burner, and Fig. 1 that from the same burner provided with the blender. The difference between the two lights is considerable, and the blender producing it is very inexpensive.

Bark Cloths.

A specimen of the bark cloth prepared by the natives of Uganda has been added to the Botanical Museum

at Kew. The material is the inner bark of a species of *Brachystegia*, belonging to the natural order *Leguminosæ*, which grows in tropical Africa. The bark is boiled and beaten out into cloth, then made into kilts, and other articles, such as canoes, bags, and ropes. We may also mention that specimens of the fibres and cloth formerly made from the Spanish broom or "genista," by the peasants of Lodéve and Languedoc have been received at Kew. The industry is dying out, but still lingers on in these days of cheap prints among the remote hamlets of the Cevennes.

A New Swimming Buoy.

The ordinary swimming bladders or cork belts for teaching people to swim have the drawback of not being graduated; and hence the new device of seven sealed tubes filled with air and strapped to the chest. Tube after tube is removed as the learner gains proficiency in the art of supporting himself and moving in the water, until at last he is able to do without any.

Electro-Magnetic Repulsion.

Professor Elihu Thompson has discovered that when a copper ring is placed over the poles of an electro-magnet excited by powerful alternating currents of electricity the ring is forcibly repelled upwards against gravity. A plate of copper introduced between the poles and the ring acts as a screen and cuts off the repulsion. A silver coin placed between the poles of the magnet is held in air by the attraction; but a base coin drops down because it has not sufficient electric conductivity. A glass vessel containing a copper ball floating in water is placed on the poles and a sheet of copper inserted to screen off half of the repulsion. The ball partly exposed to the other half begins to rotate. A glow lamp supported in the water on a wooden float surrounded by a closed coil of copper wire is seen to light up and rise in the water. Similar effects are obtained with zinc and brass, but lead fails to give them.

Time by Night.

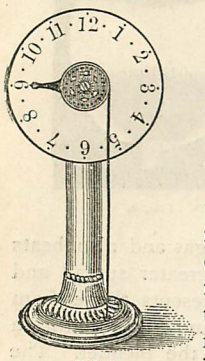
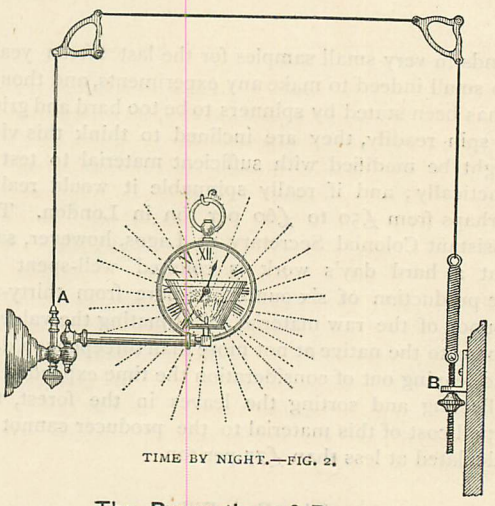


FIG. 1.

Fig. 1 illustrates a candlestick which serves as a timekeeper, while the candle produces a good light for nine hours. The dial is illuminated so as to be visible from any part of a room, and the time can be read even without raising the head from the pillow. The mechanism by which the Palmer candle, burning at a steady rate, imparts movement to the hand on the dial is of a simple character, not likely to get out of order, and it begins to act when the candle is lighted. Fig. 2 shows a gas night-light which has the advantage of being controlled by a bell-pull arrangement, A, B, so that a person in bed can turn up the jet or extinguish it in a moment. The light also tells the time by hanging a watch beside it.

Making Sand Musical.

Certain sands of Studland Bay, Eigg, the Jebel Nagous of Suez, and the Hawaiian archipelago, emit a musical note on being disturbed by the wind, or the foot of the traveller, and Mr. Cecil Carus-Wilson has long given his attention to the phenomenon. His theory is that the grains of sand in rubbing against each other produce crepitations which, in the aggregate, amount to an audible note, and he thinks that if the grains are dirty or rough, and mixed with fine grains the effect will be marred. In proof of this theory he has been experimenting, and has not only succeeded in enhancing the quality of the note obtainable from specimens of well-known musical sands, but has also elicited a note from sands not naturally sonorous, by carefully cleaning and sifting the grains, so as to get smooth rounded surfaces, and a certain uniformity of size. The polished interior of a porcelain or china cup is favourable to the production of the note, the sand being placed inside and struck. His method of treating the sand is to sift it in a sieve to eliminate the finer grains, to roll it down an inclined plane of frosted glass to separate the round from the angular grains, and to wash the selected grains in dilute hydrochloric acid in order to clean them. After this treatment the sand will probably be musical if placed in a glazed vessel, but there are doubtless some sorts which will continue to be mute.



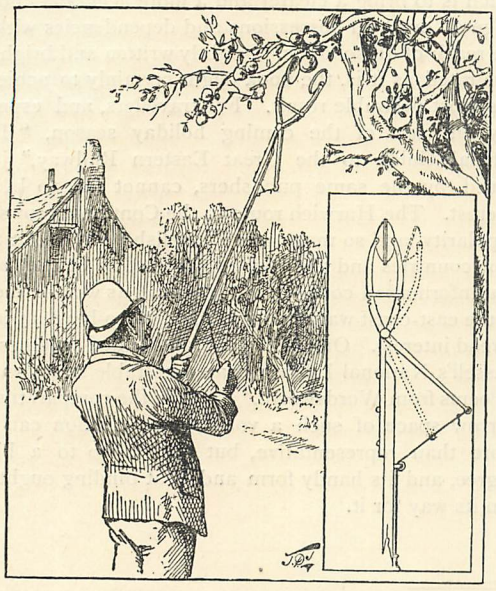
TIME BY NIGHT.—FIG. 2.

The Properties of Boron.

Having obtained pure boron, M. Moissan, the well-known French chemist, has lost no time in studying its peculiar properties. The density of the substance is 2·45. At the temperature of the electric arc it is infusible, although platinum, quartz, and other refractory materials melt and run like wax. When it is consolidated by great pressure it possesses a resistance to the passage of electricity which is much higher than that of sulphur. In air it inflames at a temperature of 700° C., and when heated in a current of oxygen it gives out a green light so dazzling that the eye cannot support the splendour. At a temperature of 620° C. it combines with sulphur, and in the electric arc with carbon,

forming borate of carbon. Iron and aluminium combine with it at very high temperatures ; but silver and platinum not at all. A mixture of boron and oxide of copper warmed in a tube of glass develops a heat so intense that the apparatus is at once melted. A simple friction is sufficient to detonate a mixture of boron and fluoride of silver.

A New Fruit Gatherer.



Our illustration shows an apparatus which has just been devised to facilitate the gathering of delicate fruit which happens to be so situated as to place it out of reach by means of a ladder. The brass cups on the head—like a small pair of cymbals—are opened by a cord which passes down the long handle ; and as soon as this cord is slackened the indiarubber ring just below the cups will pull them together, and so grip the fruit, but so slightly that it will not bruise or damage it. By placing the ring in different grooves provided for that purpose, a varying strength of grip is secured.

Inflammable Buttons.

Professor Boys has recently drawn attention to the fact that buttons which explode are now manufactured by some persons ignorant of chemistry. A lady of his acquaintance while standing near a fire suddenly found herself enveloped in smoke. Her dress had caught fire, and the ignition was traced to a place which had been occupied by a large fancy button. The button had disappeared, and Professor Boys subsequently experimented with a similar one, which vanished in smoke and flame when exposed to heat. The button smells strongly of camphor when it is rubbed on a cloth, and it may be recognised by this test.

The Olfactometer.

At a recent meeting of the Academy of Sciences, Paris, M. Charles Henry exhibited an olfactometer for testing the smelling powers of different persons. It consists essentially of a glass stem, which is dipped into an odoriferous liquid and more or less of it inserted into a paper sleeve. The odour diffuses through the paper and becomes sensible to the olfactory nerve. As the rate of diffusion is known, the quantity of odorous vapour in a volume of air can be told. M. Henry finds great differences of smelling power amongst people ; but, in general, it is possible to detect from $\frac{1}{1000}$ to $\frac{2}{1000}$ milligramme of ether per cubic centimètre of air ; but, as a rule, the more agreeable the scent, the greater is the proportion required to produce an effect on the nerve.

The Blueness of the Sky.

According to observations made at Montpellier, the sky of Europe, speaking generally, is of deepest blue in winter, and palest blue in summer, and of intermediate shades in spring and autumn. With regard to each day, it is bluest in the morning, and palest during the hottest hours. Towards evening it deepens again, but not to the same degree as in the morning. We may add that an English meteorologist has also shown that there is most cloudless sky in the south of England during the summer months, least during the winter, and an intermediate amount in spring and autumn.

Another Cab-Fare Indicator.

To avoid disputes about fares in cabs, several indicators of the distance travelled and the fare have been brought out in Paris and London. One of these consists of a mechanism actuated from the axle of a wheel of the cab and in its turn working the indicator, which is placed in view of the traveller. The dial of the indicator is divided into twelve parts representing miles, and the hand points out the number travelled. The fare is also marked on the dial, and by a modification of the apparatus the money taken can be recorded on a disc.

Cattia Edulis.

The leaves of the *Cattia edulis* have been used for centuries by the Abyssinians and Arabians to keep up their strength in the absence of food. They are either chewed or infused like tea, and a French experimenter, M. Leloups, has confirmed the report of their sustaining virtues. The tincture, as well as the infusion, produces wakefulness and banishes fatigue. The plant is a shrub with olive-green lanceolate leaves, and flourishes in the Yemen, Arabia, and in Africa, between 15° north and 30° south latitude.

In The Days of Persecution.

Miss Kate Sizer, who has been a frequent contributor to this Magazine, is the author of a story of the days of Queen Mary which is published by Mr. C. H. Kelly under the title of "Dickon O'Greenwood ; or, How the Light Came to Lady Clare." It is an interesting picture of village life in those far-off days, to which special point is given by the fact that the author lived for some time in the district which she describes. The village hero is taken prisoner for his exhibition of

Protestant zeal, and is carried before Bishop Bonner. How he fares with that famous prelate, and how his escape is ultimately brought about, and the good effect which his steadfastness produces are told, and told well, by Miss Sizer.

A Translation.

Much has been heard of late of Pierre Loti, the French naval officer whose success as a writer has won him admission to the French Academy. To English readers his work is comparatively unknown, so more than usual interest attaches to Mr. T. P. O'Connor's translation of "The Book of Pity and of Death," which has just been published by Messrs. Cassell. The author's own preface explains that the book is more his real self than anything he has yet written. There is not much in the book which reveals the author's calling; but as a revelation of the peculiar bent of his mind and the great fund of pathos he possesses, the work is very interesting.

Two New Stories.

The two most recent volumes of Mr. Fisher Unwin's quaint Pseudonym Library are "Heavy-Laden," by a German author, Ilse Frapau, and "Green Tea," which is a characteristically American story. "Heavy-Laden" is only the first of two stories which make up the volume. The scene of each is laid in Hamburg, and the forcible way in which the characters are drawn cannot fail to commend the book to English readers. "Green Tea" is strong in its plot; but some of its incidents are such as none of our readers would approve.

Books for Everyone.

And first for schools. "Round the Empire" is a new Reader which has just been published by Messrs. Cassell, and of which Mr. G. R. Parkin is the author. Lord Rosebery contributes a preface to the book, and sets the seal of his approbation upon it and its aim, which is to bring a clearer and a more accurate knowledge of our own possessions and dependencies within the reach of all scholars. Brightly written and brightly illustrated as it is, the book ought certainly to achieve this most desirable result. For travellers, and especially in view of the coming holiday season, "The Official Guide to the Great Eastern Railway," just issued by the same publishers, cannot fail to be of interest. The Harwich route to the Continent grows in popularity, and so many more English people visit the Low countries and the Rhine than used to be the case, that information concerning this route, as well as those to the east-coast watering-places, ought to have a widespread interest. One of the recently added volumes to Cassell's National Library is an admirable selection of "Poems from Wordsworth." Within the comparatively narrow space of such a volume no selection can be more than representative, but this is so to a high degree, and its handy form and neat binding ought to win its way for it.

HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT COMPETITION.

AWARD.

THE judges have reported that the eighty manuscripts which were entered for this Competition were of unusually high quality, and rendered the task of adjudication more difficult than usual. A number of otherwise good papers were disqualified by reason of undue length, and several competitors had neglected to comply with the regulations in other respects.

The Prize of FIVE GUINEAS is awarded to

BESSIE E. DUFFETT,
Meadvale,
Redhill.

We hope to publish the successful paper in the MAGAZINE in due course.—Next in order of merit were two papers by the following competitors:—

Name.	*Address.*
GRIPPER, A. J.	Chelmsford.
RIDER, LUCY	Kensington, W.

to whose papers HIGH COMMENDATION is given; and at the same time thirteen other competitors receive HONOURABLE MENTION:—

Name.	*Address.*
ARNALL, B. M.	Stoke Bishop.
CASSIN, FRIEDA	Antigua, West Indies.
CHEYNE, C.	Belfast.
EVANS, Mrs.	Westward Ho.
FENNELL, EMILY E. ...	Wakefield.
JENKINS, CHARLOTTE C. ...	Kimbolton.
MAITLAND, Mrs.	Bedford.
MARRIS, NORA M.	Moseley.
PETTIT, LILIAN	Port Elizabeth, S. Africa.
REEVES, MAUDE E. ...	Potters Bar.
WALLACE, ISABELLA ...	Clapton, N.E.
"WYVERN"	Kensington, W.
YATES, LUCY H.	Calais, France.

Unsuccessful competitors are requested to apply for the return of their MSS. as early as possible. All applications should be accompanied by a stamped addressed wrapper for the MS.

(*From a Drawing by* WAL. PAGET.)

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

(*See p.* 483.)

BARBARA MERIVALE.

By ARABELLA M. HOPKINSON, Author of "The Probation of Dorothy Travers," "Vere Thornleigh's Inheritance," "A Woman's Strength," etc. etc.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

BARBARA'S LOVERS.

ORD DENZIL was not a man to let the grass grow under his feet, and before he had been at Denzilstone a month he and his son had mastered every inch of his new property. Into every farm, every cottage, they went to look and judge for themselves, much to the surprise of the tenants, who did not quite know what to make of it. It was a shock to their prejudices that their new landlord did not attempt to maintain the gulf that lay between them and him, but treated them in a somewhat rough-and-ready fashion much as his equals, whilst, on the other hand, he was quite wanting in the gracious urbanity that had made the late baron so beloved. They soon learnt, however, to distinguish between Lord Denzil and his son. The latter was far gentler and less dogmatic than his father, understanding that American ways are not English ways, and giving a patient hearing to all statements, however rambling, that did more to gain him popularity than all Lord Denzil's contrivances for lightening labour.

And meanwhile, Richmond stayed on and on at Denzilstone, going away for a week and coming back for a fortnight, making himself so useful to every member of the family that he became a necessary component of the household. Nothing came amiss to him: from killing Lord Denzil's partridges and pheasants to painting, riding, or playing tennis with Minnie; in fact, as his host put it, "he worked very hard at loafing."

They all liked him, except, perhaps, Oliver. He was so good-humoured and obliging, that although Lord Denzil at the bottom of his heart despised him for doing nothing, he nevertheless liked to see his handsome, pleasant face at his dinner-table, and to hear his cheery voice about the house. As for Lady Denzil, she could not get on without him, whilst to Minnie he supplied the vacuum caused by the lack of those friends with whom she had been in the habit of "going around" in Philadelphia.

In fact, he more than filled it: he became to her the "be all" and "end all" of her existence; compared with him, all other men paled in her eyes. There was a chameleon-like versatility of manner about him that made him infinitely exciting, but whatever his moods might be, they were all equally charming to her, serving to strengthen the resolution that he, and he only, should be her husband.

Side by side with Richmond as an institution, Barbara had become one also at Denzilstone. Every day she walked there and back, read the papers and magazines to Lady Denzil, played to her for a while on her violin, and went home. She was taking life in earnest now, and it had become a full one to her. Her father's few words had dissipated the last remaining shreds of thoughtlessness, so that she was now inclined to fly to another extreme, and to undertake more than she could do. Early and late she worked with her father, the children, in the parish, and with her pupils. For, in addition to her daily engagement at Denzilstone, she had collected quite a little class of violin pupils in and about Centrewood.

Yet, in spite of the hard work and the anxiety respecting her father's health, life had never seemed more *couleur-de-rose* to her than it did just now, and the person who coloured it for her, as for Minnie Denzil, was Richmond.

Little as she saw of him in her daily visits to the "House"—and she often wondered how this was—he nevertheless so managed to interweave himself with everything in and around Centrewood as to come into constant contact with her. Amongst other things, he got up a concert to pay off the debt on the schools; there were meetings, practisings, and discussions without end, and at them all he had always a soft whispered word for Barbara, a gentle pressure of the hand, a glance or a gesture, which would become more pronounced whenever they found themselves alone together. As for her, she did not take the trouble to analyse how it was that this was so often the case; she was only vaguely aware that Centrewood had become very delightful to her, and that she never set foot outside the door without a delicious sense of expectancy.

She did not know that the same sense had grown to be a part of Minnie Denzil's existence, for the two girls had not become friends. On the contrary, almost from the first Miss Denzil had been markedly cold to Barbara, who, on her part, was not slow to resent it as the one drop of bitterness in her daily visit to Denzilstone. She would not, however, allow it even to herself, and she was considerably taken aback when her father mentioned it to her one morning when she was working with him in his study.

"Barbara," he began, suddenly throwing down his pen, "I have been thinking a good deal about you lately, and it seems to me that you have a great deal of freedom for your age. You come and go unquestioned, you spend half your time at the 'House,' and neither Mrs. Merivale nor I seem to look after you, but——"

"Father," Barbara interrupted him, "what has made you think suddenly of all this?"

"It is not suddenly, dear. I have been turning it over ever since Mrs. Merivale told me last week that she feared Miss Denzil was offended with you, her

manner to you was so cold. I hope, my child, you have given her no cause of offence?"

"Not that I know of; and her manner to me from the first has been icy. I have always tried to be polite to her, but I might have spared myself the trouble. She looks dow——I mean she is quite unlike all the others."

Mr. Merivale smiled. "Perhaps it is as well," he said, "for from what I gather, the others go to the contrary extreme, and you run the danger of being spoilt amongst them. They make a great fuss with you and your fiddle, don't they, dear?"

Barbara nodded. "They do make a fuss with me," she said truthfully.

"Well, then, don't let your head be turned. Be courteous to everyone, and grateful for kindness, but keep your simplicity. Remember that you are the daughter of a poor man, and don't try and measure yourself against the richer, or handsomer, or cleverer people you may meet. Now let us go on with our work."

"No, father: not till you tell me the reason of these warnings. Have I grown bumptious and conceited, and above myself?"

"No, dear, not so bad as that; only I have noticed that you return from Denzilstone with your eyes sparkling: with now and then a new piece of slang, with an inclination to snub your stepmother, because she is, fortunately, unversed in the last fashionabilities; in fact, you are young, and naturally you catch the tone of the people you are with, and you need to be—as we all do—watchful, my dear."

Barbara coloured up to her eyes. "I had no idea you were so observant, father," she said. "I do hope I have not made myself very odious."

"Not odious at all, my child. As I said before, you are young, and you need to be circumspect in a house full of strangers. If they were all like Oliver Denzil," he continued, half musingly.

"I very seldom see Mr. Denzil," put in Barbara abruptly. "He is always so busy with one thing or another. Yes, he is very nice," half patronisingly "but——"

Mr. Merivale smiled again. "But he does not flatter my little Barbara, and tell her she is a wonder, eh, is that it?"

"Father, you are horrid this morning! Do I want to be flattered? Don't I hate it? No, Mr. Denzil does not flatter me, but he is very kind indeed to me when I see him. What I was going to say was that he was just a little dull sometimes; don't you think so?"

Mr. Merivale could not help laughing as Barbara looked up into his face, with a half-comical expression.

"No," he answered, "I don't think so at all. The fact is, he is too clever for a foolish little girl of your age; but he will very soon make his mark over here, as I understand he has in America. Now we must return to our work. We don't get on very fast, do we?"

"How can we?" she cried, laughing, "when you will make such dreadful personal remarks;" and with that, she laid her hand caressingly on his shoulder, previous to plunging into a half-page-long German sentence, which, with its technical theological language, was no child's play. Mr. Merivale smiled and sighed. He could not wonder that the Denzils and their friends should make a fuss with his Barbara. Was she not, when she chose to be, a most bewitching creature, and, as far as he was concerned, the best and sweetest of daughters?

He was roused from his meditations by a tap at the window, to see Richmond standing there, in his grasp his 'cello case.

"I am come to see if we can have a practice, Miss Barbara," he asked, thrusting his head in at the open sash. "What do you say?"

"You must ask my father," she answered. "I am doing some work for him."

"No need to do that, I know, Mr. Merivale," he cried, with infectious good humour. "Is not the concert for the schools? and should I have walked all this way with this thing," pointing to his 'cello, "if I did not think a practice necessary."

Mr. Merivale laughed. "After that appeal I have no alternative," he said; "so if you will go round to the door, I will let you in."

"It is awfully good of you," said Richmond heartily, as he moved away.

Five minutes later discordant sounds were issuing from the drawing-room, where Richmond and Barbara were tuning up. Mrs. Merivale, in the kitchen, heard them and smiled. The concert was for the schools, and therefore to be encouraged. Moreover, she too had fallen under the spell of Richmond's fascinations, and would gladly have welcomed him every day at the Vicarage, provided she were not called upon to feed him. Such a glorious creature must be accustomed to nectar and ambrosia, and would shudder—which was perfectly true—at the Vicarage fare. Could she and Mr. Merivale have seen the two as they fiddled away together, they might have felt some misgivings.

Richmond had so placed himself as to obtain the best view of his companion's charms, from whence, unseen, his eyes could express the admiration he felt for her, whilst she, trying hard to give her heart to her violin, was nevertheless dimly and blissfully conscious of those admiring glances. The practice certainly did not get on very fast, necessitating, as it apparently did, frequent pauses, consultations, and conversation, all of which might have been published in Centrewood without causing remark, yet leaving Barbara with those beating pulses and heightened colour that Mr. Merivale had erroneously attributed to flattered vanity. Suddenly the clock rang out one o'clock. Richmond threw up his hands with a gesture of despair.

"One o'clock!" he cried, "I have actually been here more than an hour, and it seems to me like five minutes; and now I must go!"

"Must you, really?" asked Barbara. "Won't you stay for our early dinner?" she continued falteringly, sharing fully Mrs. Merivale's opinions as to the nectar and ambrosia, and keenly alive to the deficiencies of the Vicarage cooking.

"I wish a thousand times that I could," he said; "but, alas! we have one of those dreary functions called a luncheon party going on at Denzilstone to-day, at which I am bound to assist. The Barkers, the Sedgeworths and the Danbys are coming, and I must be at home to help her ladyship receive them, for Minnie Denzil is gone to London for the day to interview her dentist, and Lord Denzil and Oliver are never to be relied upon to be in at lunch time, so you see I have no choice. I don't think I need tell you," he added in a lower voice, and looking into her eyes, "how far rather I would stay here."

Barbara blushed softly.

"It was so kind of you to come and practise," she murmured shyly.

"Kind!" he exclaimed. "If it is kind to give oneself an hour's happiness, then I have been kind indeed." Then suddenly changing his tone and altering his voice, "We shall meet again this afternoon, of course?" he said.

"Do you think Lady Denzil will expect me," she asked, still shy and faltering, "when she has all those people there?"

"All the more reason that you should help her to entertain them. I know she expects you, so come early; and be sure and bring the fiddle. Good-bye." He took her hand in his and held it for a second, then hearing footsteps approaching, he opened the door and ran downstairs, leaving Barbara standing in the middle of the room, like one in a dream. She had not recovered from it when, an hour and a half later, she walked up to Denzilstone, violin in hand. The smile that Richmond had awakened was still trembling on her lips, the light had hardly faded out of her eyes, when she ascended the steps, and rang the door-bell. She was recalled to her senses by the buzz of conversation that greeted her ears as the butler threw open the drawing-room door, and announced Miss Merivale. Yes, they were all there: Barkers, Sedgeworths, Danbys, Lord and Lady Denzil, Oliver, and—Richmond. The large room looked almost full, but to her there was but one person in it.

"Ah, Miss Barbara, how d'ye do," cried Lord Denzil, advancing to meet her. "We have been wishing for you," he added in a lower tone, "to enliven us a little. I think you know Miss Merivale, Mr. Sedgeworth," turning to an elderly gentleman who was standing near; and Barbara found herself effectually roused from dreamland by greetings on all sides. Some of the people she knew already, some she did not: one and all seemed kindly disposed towards her, for Lady Denzil, reminded by her son, had been talking about her, and recommending her as an instructress on the violin.

"She really is admirable," she said. "She has got Lady Lemon's boy on wonderfully. He comes in to Centrewood twice a week by rail to have lessons from her, and his mother is delighted with his progress."

The three ladies smiled acquiescently. It was, of course, the right thing that every child who was not downright anti-musical should, in these days, learn the violin, and why not their sons and daughters as well as Lady Lemon's boy, who, they knew for a fact, had not a particle of talent, but whose hair looked musical—at least, so said his mother. So Barbara found her pupils increased by a Barker and two Danbys after she had given the company a solo on her violin, accompanied on the piano by Richmond, who took real pains to avoid false notes. At the end she was rewarded by quite an ovation. Mrs. Sedgeworth, the artistic lady of the neighbourhood, was so moved as to say majestically that she should have real pleasure in recommending her everywhere, since she could do so truly and conscientiously; the other ladies followed suit, and she was petted and made much of until she was quite glad to take refuge in her violin, on being entreated to play again. She looked round for Richmond to accompany her, and, to her dismay, found he was gone. He came in a minute later, hat in hand, and crossed over to where she was standing. Was it possible? he looked almost cross.

"I am under orders," he said, "so am come to say good-bye. Lady Denzil has asked me to meet Minnie at the station. It is an awful bore!" he added, in a whisper. "You know, I would a thousand times rather stay here, but——" He shrugged his shoulders; then observing that Lady Denzil was looking that way, he left his position, and disappeared through the window.

With him the light was gone for Barbara, and the conversation having taken a political turn, she was allowed to subside quietly into a seat between Lady Denzil and Mrs. Barker, whilst the gentlemen discussed the coming election, taking stock, meanwhile, of Oliver Denzil, who, it was understood by this time, was to represent his party for the Centrewood division of the county when the event came off.

Thus the afternoon wore on until the carriages were ordered round, and the guests took their departure, the gentlemen very favourably impressed with Oliver and his chances, the ladies charmed with Richmond, and with the local talent discovered in their midst in the shape of Barbara.

Lady Denzil heaved a sigh of relief as the door closed behind the last of them, leaving her alone with Barbara and her son.

"I thought they would never go!" she exclaimed fretfully. "Now, Barbara, if you will read to me a little, I shall soon drop off to sleep. I am just tired out with all those people, of whom I know nothing. I am glad though, my dear, that you have three new pupils."

"Yes," cried Barbara brightly. "It was so very, very kind of you, Lady Denzil. You don't know how grateful I am. Now, what would you like me to read to you?"

"Something dull, dear, to send me to sleep. Take any of those newspapers you like, and pick out an article. It will soon send me off. Let Oliver choose one for you. He likes dull papers."

"That is to say," said Mr. Denzil, advancing from the window, "that I am not an admirer of the so-called society papers; but that is no reason why I should fetter your choice. I would rather see what you would select for yourself."

"If I am to read it out loud, it must be a well-written article," said Barbara, "so I think I am quite safe in choosing this," holding up with rather a mischievous smile a well-known weekly journal. Oliver lifted his eyebrows.

"An admirable choice," he said; "but hardly what I should have expected a young lady to make. It is one of my favourite papers," he added, almost shyly.

"It is my father's favourite, too," she said, "and my grandmother is very fond of it. I used often to read it out loud to her, so it is an old friend of mine. Now, which article shall I choose? Lady Denzil will be getting impatient."

"This," he answered decidedly, opening it at a certain page. "It is beautifully written. May I listen to you?" he continued; and his sallow cheek seemed to flush, or it might have been the fire-light playing on it.

"I shall read very badly if you do; indeed I shall," she said.

"You see," he answered, with a smile, "I am trying to lose my American twang, and to catch the English accent before I present myself to the House of Commons. I don't think the Yankee twang would go down well there, do you?

"Oh!" she cried. "I think anything would go down there in these days; but," she continued, "do you know—I hope you won't mind my saying so—you have lost your accent a great deal already. I noticed it to-day, when you were talking to Colonel Danby."

His face brightened, so that he looked almost good-looking.

"Did you?" he said eagerly, then relapsing into his usual quiet manner. "Now, I must not keep my mother any longer from her reading."

"If you sit here by my side," said Barbara, "I shall not be able to get through a sentence."

"What shall I do, then? Where shall I retire to?" he asked.

"Somewhere where I can't see you," she answered, laughing.

He obeyed her immediately, seating himself close behind her, from whence he could survey her golden brown hair and the outline of her face. Lucky for Barbara, perhaps, that she could not see him. The reading would have come to a very abrupt conclusion if she had so much as caught a glimpse of the expression of his countenance as he sat literally devouring all he could see of her, with such eloquent glances, as few would have credited Oliver Denzil of being capable of emitting. As it was, she read on placidly to the end of the article, quite unaware of the enthusiasm for herself, for her sweet voice, for every hair in her pretty head, that was working and fermenting in the quiet man behind her. When she had finished she glanced towards the sofa. Lady Denzil was in the land of Nod, and she and Oliver were practically alone.

"I must be going now, Mr. Denzil," she said, resolutely combating her desire to stay till Richmond returned. "It is getting so late."

"Yes, it is late," he said. "I can't think where Richmond and Minnie are. If you will allow me," he continued, "I will walk home with you. I want to have a word with Mr. Merivale."

"Do you think there has been an accident?" she asked, with so much alarm that he hastened to re-assure her.

"Oh dear, no!" he said. "Minnie has lost her train: that is all."

Barbara felt relieved. Much as she was inclined to look upon Richmond as an Admirable Crichton,

"THE PRACTICE CERTAINLY DID NOT GET ON VERY FAST" (*p.* 450).

she could not but acknowledge that he was not much of a Jehu, and her fears had been connected with the dog-cart, not the train.

"Yes, that must be it," she agreed, smiling again. "Please do not give yourself the trouble of walking home with me," she added. "You know I am accustomed to going about by myself."

"It is no trouble. I—I like it—the walk I mean, if you do not mind. Besides, I want to speak to your father."

Barbara felt that it would be ungracious to expostulate further, and that she had better submit to the inevitable. After all, Mr. Denzil was not so dull as she had fancied. She even began to think that her father might be right, and that he was clever, judging by the conversation she had overheard between him and Colonel Danby this afternoon. What a pity it was he was not better-looking.

The two stole quietly out of the room, like a pair of conspirators, so as not to wake Lady Denzil, across the large hall, and so by a side door into the grounds. It was a lovely evening; the moon was just rising above the tree-tops, shedding silvery gleams over lawn and park, and radiating a gentle melancholy into Barbara's eyes. For a time she and Oliver walked on in silence: the one because she was thinking of Richmond, the other because he felt shy with this girl, whom he loved, but who, he knew, was absolutely indifferent to him. At last she spoke.

"Are you going to do anything at the concert, Mr. Denzil?" she asked.

"Yes; I distribute the programmes and hand the performers up to the platform."

She laughed. "I thought of a change this afternoon," she said. "Don't you think it would be nice to have reading as well as music? You would read, wouldn't you? and father—he reads so beautifully; and do you think we might ask Lord Denzil?"

"Certainly you might. I will tell him he is to do so, if you like."

"Oh, thank you, thank you! It is so kind of you. Everyone is so kind," she added gratefully. How pretty she looked in her enthusiasm: her eyes glowing, her little teeth gleaming in the moonlight. Oliver would have liked to have taken her then and there into his arms, and asked her to be his wife, instead of which he and she had suddenly to swerve on one side. The Denzil dog-cart had turned a corner sharply, and was coming down the avenue at a break-neck pace.

"Ah! here they are!" cried Barbara, with a sigh of relief that Oliver both heard and understood. "They are quite safe!" The next moment Richmond had drawn up at their side, and Minnie was explaining that she had lost her train, and had had to wait at the station. "Drive on now, Val," she concluded; "I am dead tired;" for Richmond was leaning over the side of the dog-cart, and had taken Barbara's hand in his.

"Just in time to say good-bye, Miss Merivale," he was saying in his usual genial voice; but, although she could not see it, perhaps Minnie guessed that his eyes and fingers were expressing more than the commonplace words, for she repeated her request peremptorily. "Drive on, Val," she said again. Richmond obeyed her at once, smiling pityingly.

"Poor Min," he said kindly, "you must be awfully tired! The combination of a dentist and waiting about at a station is indeed fatiguing. You must get in, and have a cup of tea at once."

Miss Denzil's countenance cleared perceptibly. "Val," she said, scanning his face narrowly as she spoke—"Val, an idea has just struck me."

"What is it?" he asked carelessly.

"I think," slowly weighing out each word, "that Oliver is taken with Barbara. The notion flashed into my head just now, when we met them in the avenue."

Richmond burst into his usual joyous laugh.

"Is that all?" he cried. "I thought, Min, from your solemn face, that you were about to tell me State secrets."

"To me this matter is far more important than State secrets," she answered. "What do you think about it?" still eagerly scanning his smiling, indifferent countenance.

"What do you mean?" he asked: "whether I consider it a matter of importance—no, I don't—or whether I think he is taken with Miss Merivale? To that I answer that probably he is. She is a pretty little girl," he continued patronisingly.

"Little girl!" cried Minnie. "She is taller than I am, and I'm not short."

"You must not be so dreadfully literal," he returned. "What I mean is that she is young, simple."

"Ahem!" said Miss Denzil. "I fail to see her simplicity. I wonder if I am right?"

"Very possibly," he answered; "but I should advise you not to tax Oliver with it. Here we are," as he drew up to the door. "I hope Lady Denzil has not been anxious."

Meanwhile, Oliver and Barbara pursued their way in renewed silence. Barbara's thoughts were hopelessly centred on Richmond; her fingers were still tingling from the pressure of his; for the time being, she had utterly forgotten the man by her side. He, on his part, guessed all that was passing in her mind, knew why she was silent, knew that he was less to her than Richmond's walking-stick, yet loved her none the less, as he always should love her. Yet the pain at his heart, which his manliness was striving to repress, precluded all conversation, and so they walked on in silence, until Barbara was roused from her reverie by finding herself at her own door.

"You are coming in, aren't you, Mr. Denzil, to see father?" she asked politely, suddenly conscious that she had not spoken for the last ten minutes.

But Oliver had changed his mind. "Not to-night," he said gently, pointing through the open door into the hall. "Your father is out; his hat is gone, and it is later than I thought it was; I will look in on him to-morrow. Good-night."

"Good-night; and thank you so much for walking home with me."

"Do not thank me," he said. "It—it was a pleasure." Another moment, and he had disappeared into the darkness, whilst Barbara went singing up the staircase.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

OLIVER.

WINTER had set in unusually early, and in stern reality. Frost, snow, and ice proclaimed its reign, bringing with them distress, sickness, and trouble.

Mr. Merivale felt the cold keenly after his seventeen years' sojourn in Africa, and the state of his health, acting on his mind, was for ever bringing before him the probable destitution of his family at his decease. In these circumstances the fact that Barbara was rapidly making herself a name in the district as a violin teacher was a real comfort to him. Insensibly she had become the lodestar of his life; she was young and ignorant, and had but little idea of what he went through, but her ignorance was more than counterbalanced by her love, which expended itself in a thousand contrivances for his comfort, very soothing to the worn-out man. That awful dread that her stepmother's words had awakened in her in the summer had faded a little with time. Seeing that her father looked much the same as usual, she could not but believe that she must have been mistaken, and that he had yet many years of life before him. And in the meantime, she and her stepmother were better friends than they had been a few months ago, so that altogether the atmosphere at the Vicarage was lightened in more ways than one, and Barbara was the fairy to whom this desirable change was due. But apparently her good offices were not limited to her own home.

"We all like your daughter," said Lord Denzil one day to Mr. Merivale. "She has done my wife no end of good. A little witch I call her. I really believe she could get on my blind side, if she tried."

Whether it was owing to their liking for Barbara or their own good nature, the Denzils were certainly fulfilling Mrs. Merivale's expectations of them. Game, fruit, and flowers arrived regularly at the Vicarage, all knowledge of which was denied by the various members of the family. If Lord Denzil were thanked, he would say: "It has nothing to do with me"; Lady Denzil, on her part, would refer it to her husband; whilst Oliver would declare that the garden was not his department. But Mrs. Merivale was a shrewd woman, and she guessed where the thanks were due, and kept her own counsel.

And meanwhile, the long-talked-of entertainment had come off, and had been an immense success. Instead of the usual little local affair, such as Centrewood had hitherto been accustomed to, people had come from far and wide; the town hall, instead of the parish room, had been requisitioned; the Denzils had brought a fashionable party of sixteen people; all the parents of Barbara's pupils had driven in: in fact, it had been quite an occasion.

Barbara had carried off the honours of the evening. Pardonably excited by such a large and fashionable audience, she had surpassed herself on her beloved violin, ably supported by Mary Thornton on the piano, and had drawn forth such thunders of applause, that, covered with blushes, she had almost run away from the platform. She looked so pretty as she stood there in graceful silence, getting redder and redder as the young men yelled "Bravo!" that it stimulated their energies afresh to demand yet a second *encore*, and Mr. Merivale had to put an abrupt conclusion to the din by introducing the next performer, Mr. Denzil, who was to read. Barbara sank down into a happy obscurity between Mrs. Merivale and little Jack, who remarked with brotherly and infantine candour: "I am so glad, Bab, you have finished playing the fiddle: it makes such an ugly noise; and I like you to come and sit by me." But her stepmother patted her shoulder approvingly. "I am proud of you, Barbara," she said; after which she relapsed into silence, for Oliver was beginning to read.

That is to say, he held a book in his hand, but he did not look at it. Apparently, he knew it by heart, for he never turned a leaf, and as Barbara listened to him spell-bound, entranced, she forgot his accent—forgot even that he was plain—forgot everything in the magic of the words and their delivery that held her enthralled.

And yet the story that Mr. Denzil told was simple enough. It was of one of those adventures in the far West, in which tragedy, comedy, and pathos are so intermingled that the facts do not reckon for so much as the language in which they are clothed. In this respect Oliver's narrative left nothing to be desired, for in its perfect and telling simplicity it appealed to everyone in the hall. Gentry, shopkeepers, and agricultural labourers alike were delighted; he had hit all their tastes, and as he stood quietly waiting till the storm of applause had passed away, with the shadow of a smile hovering round his mouth, more than one of the gentlemen present were inclined to agree with the audible remark delivered from the back seats, "'E's a rare good 'un, 'e is!"

Barbara was annoyed with herself. She had detected two shining tears in her eyes, brought there by the simple pathos of Mr. Denzil's narrative, and she was still busily blinking them away, when she caught him looking full at her. She turned round hastily, and when she next directed her gaze to the platform Richmond was standing there, banjo in hand, his lips curved in his sweetest smile, more Apollo-like than ever—only that Apollo could never have demeaned himself to play a banjo. Still only holding it in his hand, it made a very fair substitute for a lyre, and Barbara gave him her fairest smile as he struck the first chords, determined in his mind, which was of a somewhat petty and feminine order, to outdo Denzil.

But somehow he did not accomplish this desired end. The funny song, that had never failed to draw, fell just a little flat, the fact being that Richmond, in spite of his appearance, his captivating smile, his perfect mastery of the banjo, was not so interesting to the inhabitants of Centrewood and the neighbourhood as plain Oliver Denzil, who belonged to "the family,"

and was going to represent them all shortly in Parliament. Thus, although Barbara, Minnie Denzil, and all the young ladies clapped their hands until they were sore, and the boys and young men of the village made a great hurly-burly, and demanded an *encore*, yet he knew that he had not made the impression on the more cultivated portion of the audience that his cousin had, and it mortified him. He put forth all his strength in the *encore*, and was rewarded by a great uproar from all parties, which had the effect of restoring his good humour.

Thus the evening wore away, and success became infectious. The concerted music—particularly Richmond and Barbara on the 'cello and violin—the glees, and madrigals were all applauded, but Barbara and Oliver remained the heroine and hero of the evening, owing in a great measure to their performances, but also to their personal popularity.

"You have indeed scored this evening," whispered Richmond to Barbara, as, at a most dissipated hour for Centrewood, they filed out of the hall into the bright moonlight; "and I don't wonder. I should be afraid to tell you what you looked like as you stood up there with your fiddle."

Barbara blushed rapturously, but before she could answer he had slipped away from her side, and the next time she saw him he was putting Minnie Denzil into her carriage, getting in after her himself.

The Merivales walked home: they had but a few hundred yards to go; whilst all the carriage folk were invited to Denzilstone to a late supper. Barbara was sauntering along, with Jack's little hand in hers, thinking of Richmond's sweet words to her, and wondering what the comparison could have been that he was afraid to mention to her, when she heard Oliver's voice in the rear, conversing with her father. "It is a little sketch of my own, filled in as I went on," he was saying; and Barbara wondered idly as the words smote on her ear. But only for a second; the next moment her thoughts were back again with Richmond, and she was blushing in the cold moonlight as she remembered how he had looked at her.

"I think we may expect a treat when Mr. Denzil addresses his future constituents here," said Mr. Merivale as he sat down to his supper that evening. "Do you know that what he read—or rather, did not read—this evening, was his own composition, in a great measure improvised as he went along."

"Was it, indeed?" asked Mrs. Merivale in an awe-struck voice, opening her steel-grey eyes very wide. "Barbara," she added, turning to her stepdaughter, "that is a very clever young man."

"He ought to be something," returned Barbara, with prompt perversity; "for I am sure he is ugly enough."

At this juncture Jack obligingly contrived to drop his plate, and in the hubbub created by broken crockery and cut fingers, the scathing reply with which Mrs. Merivale had intended to rebuke her stepdaughter died away on her lips.

Events followed one another in such rapid succession just now in humdrum Centrewood, that before its inhabitants had quite recovered from the concert the day had come round when Oliver Denzil was to address his future constituents, and the town was consequently in a flutter of excitement. Richmond was again very much to the fore; functions of all classes were his strong point, and he was not to be deterred from making as much as he could of this occasion by Oliver's hatred of all fuss. On the day in question, having established Minnie Denzil comfortably over the fire to nurse a cold in preparation for the evening, he betook himself with a light heart to the town-hall, where, bustling about over the seats and the platform, he found it necessary to come into the Vicarage at least half-a-dozen times in the course of the morning on the flimsiest pretexts, to consult Barbara or Mr. Merivale. Now it was as to the shade of the ribbon to be worn by Oliver's supporters, now as to the arrangement of the seats; no matter what it was, it furnished an excuse for snatches of delicious intercourse, and every hour poor little Barbara sank deeper and deeper into the quagmire of Richmond's fascinations, persuaded that she stood on *terra firma*.

She was thinking of him, and of him only, as, with a happy smile on her lips, she took her seat in the town-hall in the evening, to hear Oliver Denzil speak. Richmond was on the platform: he was looking out for her; his smile met hers as she walked up between the rows of benches, and beside him all the other people, the county magnates, the great Mr. Bennett, who had come at immense personal inconvenience to make one of his telling speeches in favour of Mr. Denzil—even Oliver himself, the hero of the evening, faded into insignificance.

Perhaps the preliminaries were not very interesting, perhaps Mr. Bennett was not at his best; at any rate, Barbara found her thoughts sadly wandering, even during that great orator's utterances, until they were at length arrested, and chained down by Mr. Denzil himself. Without a trace of nervousness, Oliver rose to address the assembly. Quiet, self-possessed, in fluent incisive English, without a touch of the humbug he so strongly deprecated, he said what he meant, in such a guise, and with such evident truthfulness and earnestness of purpose, that he carried all his hearers with him, and for a few minutes Barbara forgot Richmond, forgot that Oliver was plain and had an American twang, and felt herself transported to a larger world, as she listened to him. She did not guess that it was her fair face, her eyes, that were inspiring him, as they had inspired him the other night; she only knew that when he ceased to speak it seemed to her that she had been listening but a few minutes, instead of more than an hour, and that she could have listened all night. She drew a deep breath of contentment: the speech had been a real treat to her; and when Richmond stepped down from the platform, and, after a few words with Minnie Denzil, sauntered up to her, and remarked in a patronising voice, "Old Oliver really speaks very fairly, doesn't he?" there arose within her a sense of incongruity which distressed her.

"Do you call it only fairly, Mr. Richmond?" she asked timidly, for she had grown shy with this young

man. "I—but then I am very ignorant of such things—thought he spoke beautifully."

"Did you?" he whispered, with a curious expression in his blue eyes. "Ah! lucky Oliver!" Barbara blushed.

"Because I think he speaks well," she laughed. "Listen to the noise at the end of the hall. Evidently the electors agree with me, which is much more to the purpose. You see, I have not a vote."

"If ever I could inspire such rapt attention as I saw just now depicted on your countenance, I should indeed think myself lucky," he murmured sentimentally.

Barbara coloured, laughed, and said nothing; she could not tell Richmond, for she hardly knew it herself that if he had stood up on the platform and talked gibberish, she would have listened to him with rapt attention.

"I must go back now," he said, "for the colonel is going to speak, and I want to put him up to a thing or two that Oliver totally omitted;" and with that, Richmond bustled back to the platform, under the erroneous impression that his presence was needed there.

After this the evening was practically at an end. The colonel proved himself but a sorry speaker, and was politely suppressed by Mr. Bennett, which brought the proceedings to a close. There was a general scraping of chairs and benches, a good deal of noise, hubbub, and confusion at the lower end of the hall, in the midst of which Barbara found herself for one moment side by side with Richmond. He was helping Miss Denzil into a gorgeous evening garment, all plush, and fur, and gold embroidery, that set off the girl's regular inanimate features to perfection. He was whispering to her, his head bent low towards hers, as he had to Barbara a few minutes before, and a smile of satisfaction was playing round the thin lips that sent a quick flash of pain through Barbara's heart; the next minute, and he had turned to her, and given her a swift tender smile, that brought the light back to her eyes.

"Of course, staying, as he is, in her father's house, he is attentive and polite to her," she comforted herself as she walked slowly down the crowded hall, in the wake of her stepmother, until, after many halts and delays, she found herself under the stars in the village street, and someone helping her through the crowd, who was not Richmond. She looked up at him mischievously.

"You have really no business here," she said. "I did not know of the existence of that little side door. I suppose you discovered it long ago. It is too bad of you to elude your admirers in this way. You ought to be stepping into your carriage, supported by Mr. Bennett, in the midst of those enthusiastic youths who are shouting themselves hoarse in your honour. You really ought, you know."

"Will you take the place of the admiring crowd," he answered, "and let me enjoy a little fresh air as far as the Vicarage? As I have managed to escape the attentions of my supporters, don't, please, send me back amongst them."

She laughed; then suddenly changing her tone, "How I wish Lady Denzil could have heard you this evening," she said.

"So do I," he answered simply.

"Oh, Mr. Denzil!" she cried, "it was such a success. You will get in, won't you? Promise you will."

"Yes," he said. "I will promise to do my level best; I can't do more than that, can I?" Then, without waiting for her answer, "Do you really care?" he asked—and this time he too whispered—"whether I get in or not?"

"Of course I do," she said, but there was no suspicion of a whisper in her voice. "I care immensely. It would be too dreadful if Mr. James were to be successful."

Oliver felt as though he had received a cold douche. It served him right, he thought.

"Well, here we are at the Vicarage," he said quietly; "and I must say good-night."

"Good-night," she answered. "Thank you very much for walking with me. Remember, you have promised to get in;" and with that she opened the door and disappeared into the Vicarage.

Oliver walked home in the quiet cold moonlight. "I have a double task to perform," he thought to himself: "to make myself a name, and then to win her. Not to-day or to-morrow, perhaps not for years, but at some time. Yes, she will be mine."

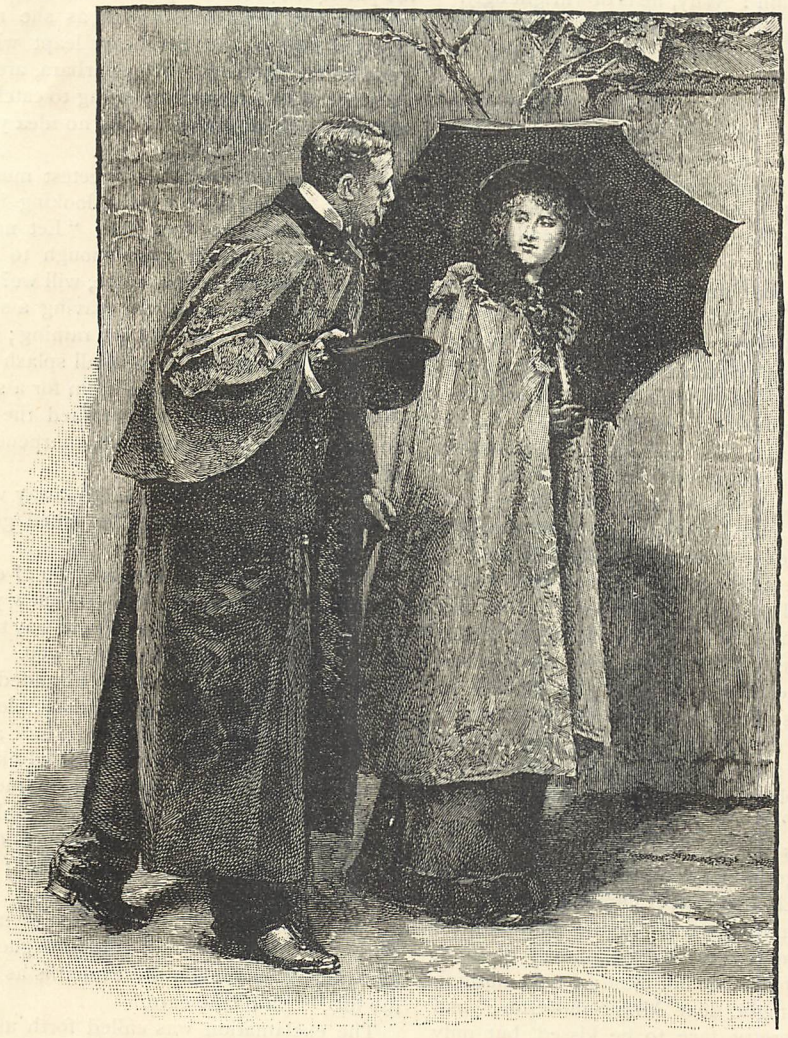
He spoke out loud, for there was no one to hear him, only the sighing of the wind in the branches of the chestnuts broke the silence of the night. "Yes, mine some day." He said it not boastfully, not triumphantly, but rather as though it were a certainty; and his footsteps resounding on the hard, frost-bound earth, seemed to echo his words—"Mine—mine."

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

"BARBARA, DO YOU LOVE ME?"

BARBARA MERIVALE was very unhappy. For the last few months she had been morally living on champagne; to-morrow would see her returning to cold water, for to-morrow the Denzils and Richmond were going to town for the parliamentary season, and Centrewood would revert to its normal humdrum existence.

Oliver had fulfilled his promise to her; he had been returned for the southern division of Blankshire by a fair majority, mainly owing—so said Richmond—to his exertions and those of the ladies. That the latter had worked hard was undeniable, as both Minnie Denzil and Barbara could have testified. As for the latter, she had spent all her well-earned leisure, had lavished her prettiest smiles on the voters, their wives and children, under Richmond's orders, and had been rewarded by constant encounters with that busy young man. It did not strike her as strange that she should meet him so frequently, and usually in some out-of-the-way cottage, far from gossiping tongues. No, she was not surprised, only glad. The pretty wild-rose colour would flame up into her cheeks and the light into her eyes as her hand was taken for a brief second, whilst



"NOW HE WAS BY HER SIDE, LOOKING INTO HER FACE" (*p.* 458).

his eyes gazed into hers with an expression which could have only one meaning.

And now he and the Denzils were going away, and she would be left behind, with only the memory of lingering hand-pressures, ardent glances, significant words, and—nothing more. Well might she feel out of spirits as she sat the night before the dreaded hegira in the Miss Sandersons' drawing-room, silently gazing into the fire, and leaning her head upon her hand. She was very tired. She had been up early and worked hard all the morning, and had walked up to Denzilstone in the afternoon, with a wild hope in her heart, to bid Lady Denzil adieu, only to find her the sole occupant of the house, and to learn that Richmond was away, and would probably not be back till nightfall; her father was poorly, and yet would not give in to being nursed; and finally, to-morrow Denzilstone would draw down its blinds, and darkness would reign where now there was, oh! such radiant light.

Small wonder, then, that her heart was aching even more than her back, and that an unconscious little sigh rose to her lips as she became aware that Miss Sanderson was speaking. "He is my favourite of the whole party," she was saying, as she bent over her work; and Barbara looked up with an acquiescent smile: of course she was speaking of Richmond.

"Not that I know much of him," she continued. "He has better things to do than to pay afternoon calls; but what I have seen of him I like so very much. I, you know, do not think him so plain as some people do."

Plain! How silly she was! Of course Miss Sanderson could not mean Richmond. "Dear Miss Sanderson," she said, "I have been horribly rude, and fallen into a brown study. Please, whom are you speaking of?"

"Mr. Denzil, dear."

"Mr. Denzil not plain! Why, he is downright ugly."

"Not with those eyes," returned Miss Sanderson, with more than usual decision. "Such a clever, intelligent face as his can never be downright ugly."

"He is one of Mary's swans," interposed Miss Jane from the writing-table, where she was inditing a letter to India; "and I so far agree with her that he is worth a dozen conceited Mr. Richmonds."

She said this with some emphasis, after which she resumed her pen, and became apparently re-absorbed in her letter.

But Barbara was not one to sit by and hear her friends decried. "I do not see any reason to compare them," she returned somewhat hotly; "there is no resemblance in any way between them. Nor can I see that Mr. Richmond is conceited. He knows loads and loads of people; he stays out immensely; he goes everywhere in London, and yet he has taken endless trouble for this little place, and thrown himself into our concerts, and penny readings, and politics, and done everything he could think of to make them go off well. I never met with anyone so good-natured."

"All the same, he is conceited," retorted Miss Jane; "but I will allow, Barbara, that he is an extremely handsome young man, that his clothes fit him perfectly, that his wardrobe is enormous—I never see him two days running in the same suit; that his smile is so infectious, his eyes so blue, his acquaintances so smart and so aristocratic, that all the girls are in love with him; and that it is a very good thing for Centrewood and the neighbourhood that he is going away to London to-morrow."

"Which reminds me," said Barbara, rising to her feet, "that I must go home, or I shall be scolded." It had suddenly struck her that Richmond might come to say good-bye on his way from the station if he were to arrive by the 6.30 train. "Raining? I think it has left off; anyhow, I do not mind: I have nothing on to spoil. Good-night, dear Miss Sanderson;" and she held up her pretty face to be kissed, but only extended a hand to Miss Jane, as, pen in hand, the latter came forward to say "Good-bye." She felt very angry with Miss Jane, all the more so that her shaft had gone straight home.

"In love!" she murmured to herself, as she plunged into the darkness. The rain had ceased, and the moon had risen, throwing patches of shimmering light into the pools of water that dotted the ill-paved streets, as she gathered her skirts together, preparatory to running the half-mile that intervened between the Miss Sandersons' house and the Vicarage. "In love!" she repeated, her cheeks burning in the chilly night air as she recalled Miss Jane's innuendo.

But whatever her faults might be—and she had plenty of them—untruthfulness was not one; moreover, it seemed to her a disloyal thing to disclaim that of which she would have been proud, had her feelings been reciprocated; and reciprocated they were, she felt sure, although—although——

"Yes, I suppose I am," she said slowly, "and he—he——"

"Miss Barbara?" The sound came mingling with the patter of the raindrops from the eaves of the houses with her own echoing footsteps as she ran along the deserted streets, and her heart leapt with joy as she stood still to listen. "Miss Barbara, are you running for a wager? I have been trying to catch you up ever since you left Fairfield. I had no idea you were such an Atalanta."

Ay, it was his voice: the sweetest music she knew; and now he was by her side, looking into her face, taking her umbrella from her. "Let me hold it for you," he said. "You have enough to do with your dress. We won't run any more, will we?"

"Oh, no!" she answered, heaving a sigh of perfect satisfaction. "Oh, no! it's not raining; we can walk."

"Slowly," he said, "or we shall splash ourselves."

There was silence between them for a second, during which Richmond attentively studied the pure delicate outline of his companion's face, sharpened and refined by the moon's rays.

"Did you think I should go away without saying good-bye to you, Barbara?" he asked gently, bending his head low towards her.

"No," she answered, with a throb of exultation; he had called her Barbara. "I—I—knew you wouldn't."

"You knew right. I was on my way to the Vicarage from the station now, when I met you. I leave early to-morrow morning. To think," he added, with a sigh—a real heartfelt sigh—"that all these pleasant months should have come to an end!" Then, as she did not answer—"They seem to have passed like a few days," he went on, "such happy days to me. Have they been so to you?" His voice had sunk to a whisper. Barbara's heart was beating to suffocation.

"Yes," she managed, nevertheless, to answer, "very, very happy."

"Do you know who has made them happy to me, Barbara?" he asked. "Can you guess why I shall always look back upon these months as the sweetest of my life? Ah! take care."

The exclamation was called forth as they rounded the corner of one of the narrow streets, and Barbara's head, turned towards Richmond, suddenly came in contact with a great timber, projecting some five or six feet from a cart that was slowly lumbering down the street. The girl started back with a little cry of dismay, and in one moment Richmond had his arm round her, and was drawing her close to himself. "Are you hurt, darling?" he asked, with tenderest solicitude. They were absolutely alone. The man in charge of the cart was as ignorant of what was going on at its rear as if he had been miles away; the timbers effectually impeded his sight, the grinding of the heavy wheels his hearing. Down the street the houses were all decently shuttered and curtained; Richmond and Barbara were as much alone as if they had been in an African desert. "Are you hurt, darling?" he repeated.

"Oh no, not hurt; only startled. It was my own fault for not looking where I was going to."

"But you touched it. Your hat is knocked all on one side. I am sure you are hurt; you are quite pale.

Let me see." He took her head between his hands, and turned it towards a gas-lamp that was flaring feebly on the wet pavements. On her temple was a scratch, from which was flowing a thin thread of blood. The light of the lamp fell full on the lovely face, where excitement, love, and the fright caused by the suddenness of the blow were struggling for the mastery. It acted on Richmond as a match on tinder. "Why, you are bleeding, dear!" he exclaimed in genuine horror, producing his handkerchief, and dabbing away at her temple, in spite of her protestations.

"It is nothing, really nothing. Oh! please, Mr. Richmond."

"What!" he exclaimed; "won't you let me do this little thing for you—you whom I love better than any woman on earth"—dab, dab—"you, the sweetest, fairest creature I know. I tell you, the very first day I met you in that grey dress of yours I felt it was my fate to love you, and every day, every hour, has strengthened that love. Barbara, my sweetest, my loveliest, do you love me?"

Barbara stood pale, passive, transfixed by the vehemence of the words that flowed like hot lava from those usually smiling lips, by the rapturous, tumultuous joy that was throbbing at her heart, mingled with a dull sickly pain at the back of her head, that seemed somehow to impede her words.

"Barbara, do you love me?" Richmond asked the question imperiously; his face was close to hers, there was a glitter in his eyes she had never seen there before, he had drawn her closer to himself, in another moment, there in Centrewood street, his lips would have met hers. With a little inarticulate cry she sprang on one side.

"Oh, Mr. Richmond!" she gasped, "please, I am all right; it is only a scratch," feeling her hurt with her fingers. For a second Richmond stared with surprise, the next the light of comprehension stole into his eyes; he smiled gently.

"Don't be frightened, my darling." How exquisite the possessive pronoun sounded in Barbara's ears. "I am afraid, though, that you are more hurt than you will allow; but that was not what I asked you, was it, dear? I asked you if you loved me. Give me your answer, sweet." His breath was coming quick and short; he was evidently still excited, and his arm was closing more tightly round her waist. With a smile of absolute childlike confidence and trust, she turned her face to him.

"Yes," she said simply and truthfully, but not another syllable could she get out.

"Dearest!" he murmured, bending low down to her; then suddenly, with an exclamation, he sprang apart from her, putting about half a yard between them.

"Hang that fellow!" he muttered viciously between his teeth. "He is always in my way."

Barbara, looking out into the murky darkness to see what was the matter, could just descry by the light of the gas Oliver Denzil emerging from the Vicarage, and in her heart she could have found it to endorse Richmond's interjection. She, too, straightened herself morally and physically, opening her umbrella—for the rain was splashing down again in great heavy drops—and widening the distance between herself and Richmond by another quarter of a yard, so that when Oliver came up to them, they were hurrying on in the most commonplace way together, as beseems two people in the rain.

"Now then, Oliver, my good fellow, you must not stop and palaver," said Richmond. "Miss Merivale is wet already, and I am seeing her home as fast as we can go."

"I will walk the same way," said Oliver calmly, "and then I need not detain Miss Merivale. I have just come from the Vicarage," he continued, "where I have been making my adieus. They were wondering what had become of you."

Then, at last, Barbara found her tongue.

"How stupid of them!" with a nervous little laugh. "I thought they knew I was gone to Fairfield. I found both the Miss Sandersons at home," she went on hurriedly, "and you know it is not easy to get away from them."

"I am so glad to have met you," said Denzil. "I came out to look for you. I should not have liked to have left Centrewood without saying good-bye to you——"

"Here we are, Miss Barbara," interrupted Richmond; "and there is Jack looking out for you. Now, take my advice, and go in, and put some arnica—no, calendula—on that scratch of yours."

"Scratch!" exclaimed Oliver. "Have you hurt yourself?"

"Oh, it's nothing," laughed Barbara. "I did not look where I was going, and bumped my head against a projecting timber. It's not worth mentioning. I think my hat was the greatest sufferer."

"It's a nasty thing to do," he rejoined. "You are sure you are not really hurt?"

"Quite sure. I have only a little headache, that's all, so I had better go in. Good-bye."

She spoke to Oliver, but she looked at Richmond, and he took her hand, squeezing it tightly. He was quite himself again; the excitement had died out of his face, and left him cool and smiling, as usual.

"Good-bye, Miss Merivale," he said jauntily, "or, rather, *au revoir*. You will be coming up to London to the Greys, I expect, before long, and then I shall be sure to see you."

Oliver did not squeeze her hand; he shook it warmly. "Good-bye, Miss Barbara," he said. "You must come and pay my mother a visit in Cadogan Square. I don't know how she will get on without you."

"And I shall miss you all dreadfully," she cried, still looking at Richmond—"oh, dreadfully!" and then she resolutely opened the door, and disappeared into the Vicarage.

She did not go into the drawing-room; she went straight up to her bedroom, and sat down upon her bed to think. She had forgotten her scratch and her headache—forgotten everything but Richmond. For very rapture she covered her face with her hands, the better to live over again the scene she had just gone

through. Ah, what bliss was hers! To be loved by such a man as Richmond! It seemed almost too much happiness to be true. And yet he had said so—said that it was his fate to love her, remembered her poor grey dress, declared that she had made him happy. She went through every word he had uttered, repeating them over and over again, always seeing Oliver Denzil's fateful figure looming through the darkness, and interrupting that flood of sweetest eloquence. And then, to-morrow! Surely he would not go to London early? He would write to her, or, better still, come and see her, say all those sweet things over again—and—and ask her to be his wife.

Barbara lived throughout the evening in her dream of bliss to go to bed, but not to sleep. Half the night through she lay quietly enough, going over every syllable she and Richmond had exchanged to the rhythmic accompaniment of the steady patter of the rain upon her window-panes; the other half she tossed restlessly about, remembering how he was leaving her on the morrow. Towards four o'clock, she fell asleep, to dream of him, till she awoke earlier than usual.

Nevertheless, she looked prettier than ever, notwithstanding the scratch on her temple, as, with the soft, radiant light of happy love in her eyes, she came downstairs at the first sound of the postman's knock, to inquire—"Any letter for me, Jane?"

"No, Miss," came the prompt response, which took a little of the light out of her eyes, and enabled her to sit soberly down to her breakfast as usual.

"The Denzil party will be passing directly," said Mrs. Merivale; "that is to say, the three gentlemen; they go by the nine o'clock train."

"We shall miss them very much," said Mr. Merivale; "they have all been extremely kind to us."

"There they are!" cried Barbara, darting to the window, a horrible dread at her heart; for there, on the dog-cart, she could descry four male figures, shrouded in mackintoshes and dripping umbrellas (for it was still raining heavily); but unmistakably Lord Denzil, driving, Oliver, the groom, and—Richmond.

Like a flash of lightning they went by. There was a spasmodic contortion amongst the umbrellas, a determination of hands to hats, and then they were gone. They had passed so swiftly—Lord Denzil, passionately fond of driving, was a true son of Nimshi—that Barbara was unable to take home to herself so much as a smile from Richmond. Oliver only had succeeded in baring his head, and it was his unspoken adieu that alone had made itself distinct in the mist of rain and wraps that enshrouded the dog-cart.

Soberly and sadly Barbara returned to the breakfast table, to eat nothing more.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

AFTER THREE MONTHS.

THREE months had passed away since that morning when Barbara had stood at the Vicarage window, and watched through the rain the Denzilstone dog-cart out of sight; and during all these three months, neither in letter nor in person, had she heard one word from Richmond. At first she had hoped, exhausting her ingenuity in framing elaborate excuses for him, that he was busy, that he was waiting to run down from town to see her; but when days turned to weeks, and weeks to months, and still there came no sign from him, her heart grew sick within her as to know what it could mean.

Over and over again, by day and by night, she rehearsed to herself that scene with him in Centrewood street; over and over again she recalled every word he had said to her during his stay at Denzilstone, trying to comfort herself with futile suggestions, that he had written to her, and the letter had been lost or never posted; that he was ill, or in trouble, or—false. But this last solution of his silence never rose above a whisper, hardly even attained to that dignity; strangled at its birth, it nevertheless reared its head again and again, only to be met with the same treatment, the same old arguments. No, he was ill; he must be ill, or in trouble or—but false! oh, no; not that. Had he not said that he loved her, that she had made him happy, and so on, through the weary weeks of hope deferred?

Nevertheless, she bore herself bravely; she would sooner have died than let anyone guess that there was something amiss with her, supported by the fact that there was quite sufficient in her circumstances just now to account for loss of appetite and sleep, and for those dark rings round her eyes that people were so quick to notice. For altogether, things were going badly with our poor Barbara at this time. Her grandmother, Mrs. Grey, who had been mother and grandmother in one to her, was dead; had been found lifeless one morning in her bed, without symptom or warning, and none had felt the extinction of that clever, kindly life more than her granddaughter. The happy meeting-place in Eaton Square was broken up, uncles and aunts scattered, and Barbara left the poorer by a thousand recollections, and the feeling that Centrewood was now irrevocably her home, from whence there was no escape to a haven in London, to which she might fly whenever she felt so inclined.

But not even the death of Mrs. Grey, announced in the papers, had broken Richmond's mysterious silence; there had been a little kindly note of condolence from Lady Denzil, couched in conventional terms, and that was all; Denzilstone and the happy days she had spent there seemed to have passed out of her life as completely as though it had never existed.

It was well for Barbara that, at this crisis of her life, every minute of her time was filled up. The wholesome, healthy routine of the day, with its monotonous round of commonplace duties, was, if she had only known it, her best safeguard against the weariness and disgust engendered by Richmond's conduct, and by the long sleepless nights, with their haunting phantasmagoria of his looks, words, and actions, that were her nightly portion now.

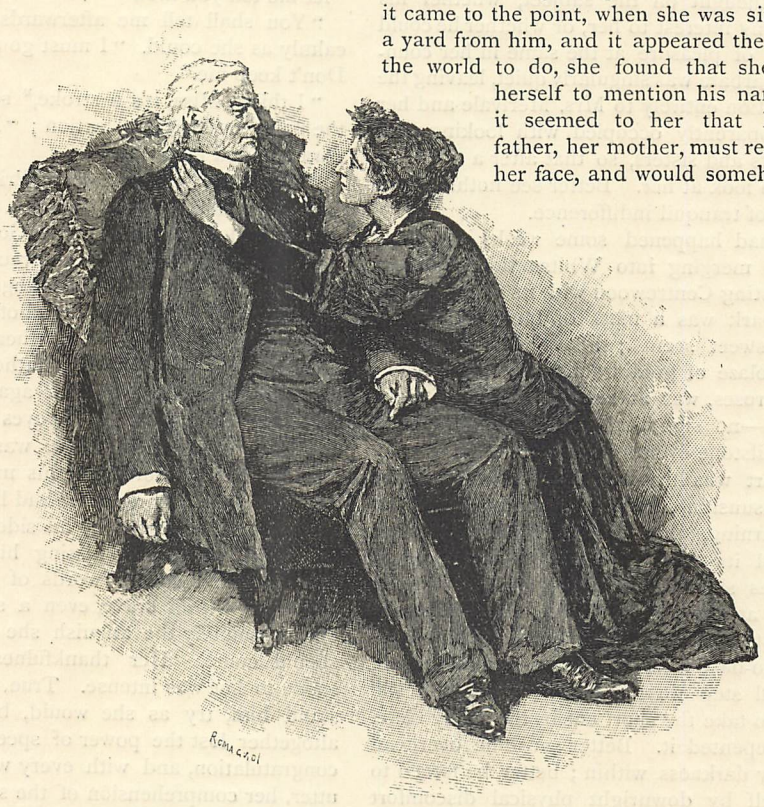
True that her occupations had lost their savour; that her pupils tried and irritated her nerves, that the little pettinesses of parish work and country town

gossip annoyed her, that her stepmother seemed more common than ever; still she held bravely on her way, growing daily more patient and gentle, in proportion to the very effort she had to make to refrain from the hasty word or sharp reproof.

Only in her father's study was nothing altered for her. It was to her now—as it had always been—a haven of refuge, where, in the really hard brain-work she was sometimes called upon to do, she could forget for a time, as completely as though she had never seen him, Richmond and all his fascinations. On his part, Mr. Merivale, manlike, dearly as he loved her, had not a notion that his little Barbara was suffering from heart-ache, caused by man's faithlessness. He knew that the death of her grandmother had been a very great grief to her, and to that he put down the wistful look in her eyes, the dark shadows that encircled them, the sharpened curve of the finely-moulded jaw, so like her mother's, that he could not fail to notice it.

And meanwhile, the silence of Richmond was only one degree more mysterious than the silence of the Denzils. That invitation from his mother to Barbara that Oliver had spoken of had never come; no word beyond the one short letter of condolence had reached the Vicarage from Cadogan Square to throw any light on the Denzils' or Richmond's extraordinary behaviour. Mr. Denzil, it is true, had written once to Mr. Merivale—a strictly business letter; and even when it came to Easter-time, when Centrewood had made up its mind that "the family" would put in an appearance at Denzilstone for a week or two, he was the only one of the party who fulfilled its expectations, and that only for a day.

During that day, however, to Mrs. Merivale's supreme delight, mingled with much culinary anxiety, he lunched at the Vicarage; and Barbara at last found herself face to face with someone who could give her information respecting Richmond. But, alas! when it came to the point, when she was sitting only about a yard from him, and it appeared the easiest thing in the world to do, she found that she could not bring herself to mention his name. If she did, it seemed to her that Mr. Denzil, her father, her mother, must read her secret in her face, and would somehow become illuminated as to that scene in Centrewood market-place. So she sat on thorns, longing to speak, and yet silent, whilst the precious minutes raced by, and Mr. Denzil discoursed on every topic under the sun but that of Valentine Richmond. Nor did he speak much of his mother and sister, beyond saying that the former had found a new doctor, in whom she placed much faith, and that the latter delighted in London, living in a whirl of society from morning till night. Always chary of talking of himself, on this occasion there was no necessity for him so to do. From the day that he had made his first speech in the House of Commons, he had sprung into celebrity; the newspapers of his party had patted him on the back, announced that he was one of the most rising young men of the day, and that his appointment as secretary to a very eminent official in Ireland was



"IN A SECOND SHE HAD KNELT DOWN BY HIS CHAIR" (*p.* 462).

only a stepping-stone to something better. All this, and a great deal more, the Merivales knew, thanks to the publicity so liberally shed on everyone nowadays who does anything, from governing an empire down to playing a banjo ; and Mrs. Merivale, with the want of breeding that so frequently made her stepdaughter wince, was not slow to enlarge on so delectable a topic, returning again and again to what she was pleased to call Mr. Denzil's triumphs. Oliver bore it good-humouredly enough, being chiefly concerned to know what Barbara thought on the subject, whether his success was of any interest to her, or whether he could trace any signs of pleasure at the same in her countenance. But Barbara was singularly quiet, leaving the field of conversation entirely to Mrs. Merivale and her father, being apparently occupied with looking after her little brothers and sisters, so that after a time Mr. Denzil ceased to look at her. Better see nothing than that expression of tranquil indifference.

But all this had happened some weeks ago now. Easter was fast merging into Whitsuntide, and late spring was investing Centrewood with its own peculiar beauty. The park was a mass of blossom, the air fragrant with sweet scents ; above the town the common was a blaze of gold from gorse and broom ; June, with her roses, was at hand, yet still no word from Richmond—no sign that the Denzils intended coming to Denzilstone even for the recess.

Barbara's heart was heavy as lead—all the heavier for the brilliant sunshine, for the singing birds, for the mysterious yearning, the unsatisfied longing that Spring, with all its gladsomeness, awakes even in happy hearts, as she walked through the park one lovely morning at the end of May. As a rule, she avoided Denzilstone ; it reminded her too painfully of the past ; but to-day, with that pitiless sun overhead, every additional step was of consequence, and she nerved herself to take the short cut by the Holly Gate. But she soon repented it. Better sunshine overhead than that dreary darkness within ; better be forced to think of herself by downright physical discomfort than to tread the familiar path, with always Richmond by her side, his whisper in her ear, his eyes meeting hers ; better anything than that fierce battle of doubts, questionings, wonderings, which could not be suppressed in the very surroundings that had given them birth.

Worn out mentally and physically, she reached home, looking so white, that at any other time Jane, the servant, who met her at the gate, would have been frightened, if she had not already been full of a more engrossing subject.

"Oh, Miss !" she cried, as soon as she caught sight of her, with a burst of relief, "I *am* glad to see ye. Mrs. Merivale is out, and there's no one at home but me ; and the Vicar——"

"What about him, Jane ?" cried Barbara, with a kind of feeling that she had known all along that something was going to happen.

"There, now, Miss, ye mustn't take on. I raised 'im up, ye see——"

"Raised him up ? From where ? How ?"

"From the floor, to be sure. Don't ye look so scared, Miss, don't ye—I put him into his chair, and——"

"Did you send for Doctor Prince ?"

"No, Miss, I didn't. I could not leave him, ye see. I was alone in the house with him."

Barbara groaned.

"How long ago was it ?" she faltered.

"It might be half an hour ; I am not sure. No, Miss," as Barbara tried to pass her to go to her father ; "let me tell you first."

"You shall tell me afterwards, Jane," she said, as calmly as she could. "I must go to him now, at once. Don't keep me."

"I think, Miss, it's a stroke," said Jane, brought to the point by Barbara's action ; "leastways——" Barbara stopped her.

"You must go for Doctor Prince at once, please, Jane," she said. "Don't waste a second ; and meanwhile I will take care of him. Go, please."

Jane obeyed, and Barbara proceeded to her father's study. Her heart was beating so that she could hardly turn the latch, for dread of what the open door might disclose to her. But when she did enter, she drew a sigh of relief. Her father was sitting in his chair, his head thrown back against a cushion, very pale, but conscious, for his eyes turned towards her as she approached, and there was a pitiful attempt at a smile and a contortion of his mouth which was not speech. Jane was right, he had had a stroke.

In a second she was by his side, had knelt down by his chair, was softly kissing his poor drawn face, lavishing little cooing words of tenderness and love upon him, with a brave, even a smiling face, keeping down resolutely the anguish she felt, until Dr. Prince should come. Her thankfulness when he at last spoke to her was intense. True, she could not understand him, try as she would, but that he had not altogether lost the power of speech was a matter for congratulation, and with every word he struggled to utter, her comprehension of the same grew clearer, so that by the time the doctor arrived she had been able to make out what it was he wanted to say.

When, however, Dr. Prince and Mrs. Merivale did arrive—and they came together—she found that she was to be banished from the room.

"We must have as few people as possible about him," said the doctor peremptorily, as with a kindly and reassuring smile—for he was very fond of Barbara—he unceremoniously shut the door behind her. Thus dismissed, she retired into the nearest room she could find : namely, the kitchen, where Jane was keeping watch over baby, there to ask the former for a detailed account of the finding of her master insensible, and of what subsequently took place. Patiently, this time, she listened to the whole history, given in Jane's most graphic vernacular, keeping all the time an eye on the open door, and one ear alive to every sound proceeding from the study. At last, after what seemed hours to her, she heard a door open, and then Mrs. Merivale's voice calling :

"Jane ; I want Jane."

Barbara flew to ask what was wanted, only to be impatiently waved back by her stepmother.

"You look after the children, Barbara," she said. "Keep them quiet, and send Jane to me at once. We want her."

Then followed another long period of suspense, during which there was the sound of many feet on the staircase, of the opening and shutting of doors, of much moving backwards and forwards overhead, during which, too, baby, mysteriously influenced by the agitating atmosphere of the house, became restless, fidgetty, finally naughty; till, tired out, she cried her little self to sleep in Barbara's arms. Thus Mrs. Merivale found the two when, a few minutes later, pale and haggard, she appeared upon the scene.

"We have got him to bed at last," she said, sinking into a chair by her stepdaughter's side; "and Doctor Prince is gone." Then suddenly bursting into tears, "We must make up our minds to the worst, Barbara," she sobbed. "Your father has had a stroke, and can never be the same man again; and what we shall do I cannot think. He must either resign the living or pay a curate to do the duty. Whichever way it is, it means ruin to us, unless the Denzils help us. You go now, and sit with your father—mind, you are not to talk to him. I am going to write to Lord Denzil."

END OF CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

AN OLD FRIEND IN A NEW GUISE.

IN no one thing, perhaps, is the tyrant Fashion more dictatorial to woman than in the kind of fancy work with which she may be allowed to occupy her leisure moments. Some such occupation is to many of the gentle sex as indispensable as the soothing weed is to our husbands and brothers. But it is the reverse of soothing to moil and toil over the accomplishment of some elaborately artistic needle-painting, the delicate weaving of point lace—that sight-spoiling craze of fifteen years ago—or the adorning of articles—which to all intents and purposes were better left plain—with innumerable stitches, neither artistic nor profitable.

Work of this kind is essentially labour: back-aching, eye-dimming, temper-shortening. If it must be done at all, let it be regarded as toil, and not undertaken lightly; but let no woman deceive herself with the idea that it is a recreative or soothing employment.

For my own part, no craze ever made me so indignant as that for "Russian Embroidery." So simple—only little cross-stitches, which the most stupid child can acquire with perfect ease—and *so* fashionable! This was the bait that the victims so readily swallowed. But when these little innocent-looking stitches are multiplied by millions, and grouped into designs which entail incessant counting, and when the result of looking off to answer some trivial question is "losing count"—and the result of losing count is that the lines of your geometrical designs won't combine, and look like an intoxicated problem in Euclid—and you have to count back to find out where you went wrong, and discover, with a groan, that it was quite at the beginning, and the whole thing must come out: I say it is simply maddening.

Another work, of which it is difficult to see either the utility or the beauty, is the worsted work with which ladies used to execute pictures of "Mary and her Little Lamb," or "Dignity and Impudence," etc. These unsightly objects were ultimately framed and hung up as an example of the industry of the performer. Such industry was surely misplaced. Nor can we say much more for the zeal which covers chair-backs with designs on which much cost of money, time, and nerve friction have been spent, when beautifully artistic woven material could have been obtained for, perhaps, a quarter the expenditure.

For the great majority of sensible and industrious women the great desideratum is a work that shall

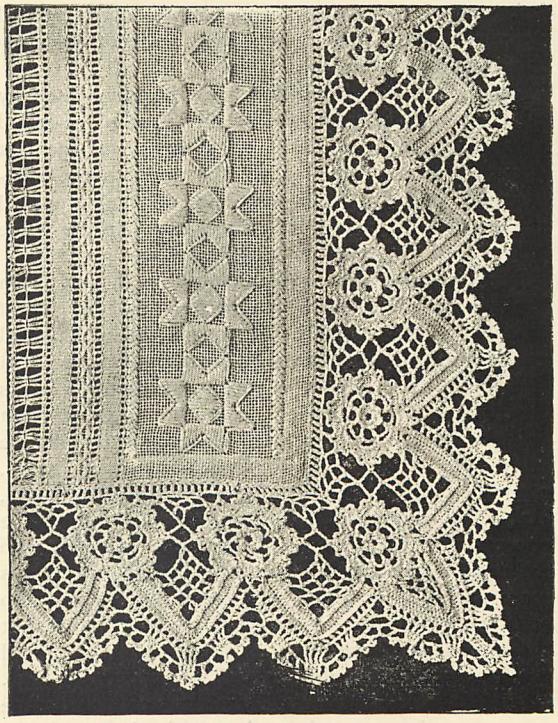


FIG. I.—BED SPREAD.

(From a Specimen kindly lent by Messrs. Bedford, of Regent Street.)

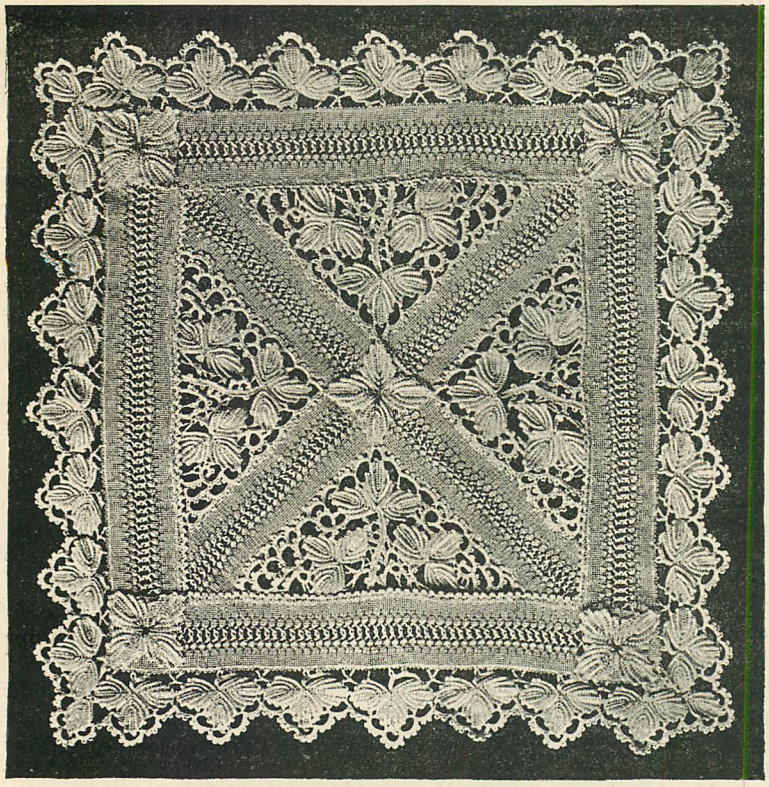


FIG. 2.—TABLE CENTRE OR CUSHION COVER.
(*From a Specimen kindly lent by Messrs. Bedford, of Regent Street.*)

employ without engrossing, occupy without tiring, be easy, portable, of fairly small dimensions, capable of being taken up or put down at any moment, of real practical value when accomplished, and not unsightly in progress of execution.

This last essential banishes from the general society of even the home circle almost all kinds of so-called plain needlework or garment-making. But the fact of such a need is displayed by the never-dying popularity of knitting, which pre-eminently combines all the essentials I have enumerated, and, like the name Mary, finds favour alike with princess and peasant.

Many of those who are now no longer in first youth became proficient in their childhood in the art of crochet: a kind of work which, from its mechanical nature, ranks in my mind only second to knitting as a recreative employment. Crochet, however, had its day, and was by Fashion sentenced to death. But being inherently valuable, the sentence could not be carried into effect, and for such purposes as shawls, petticoats, mittens, mufflers, cross-overs, babies' boots, etc., it has triumphantly held its own. Now, with the exception of the two first, these are precisely the articles for which, in my humble judgment, knitting is more specially adapted ; but crochet is so easy, so speedy, and so effective, that it is frequently utilised at the expense of durability. As a fact, many crocheted woollen articles wash less well than knitted ones. Some of the most beautiful designs and appropriate uses of crochet are only to be obtained through the medium of cotton ; but, except in the case of "Irish point," cotton crochet has for many years been completely out of date.

A revival of this work on the old familiar lines, but with certain features of novelty to lend an extra charm, will be welcome news to many of us. Such a revival has come about in the form of the so-called ivory work which has this winter been shown by the leading firms who import foreign needlework.

This work, which hails from Germany — being principally executed by the Bavarian peasantry—while employing only the old stitches, has a rich and novel effect, quite absent from the antimacassars, cheese-mats, tassel-covers, and edgings of former days. This result is due to two causes: (1) the kind of cotton employed ; (2) the individuality—if I may so speak — of the designs. To these we must add the combination of the specially manufactured "ivory" canvas, without which the work would lose its principal attractiveness.

The cotton, which also comes from Germany—though I understand that English firms are beginning to take up the manufacture—is of a peculiarly soft firm twist, and of an exquisite ivory shade. The coarser numbers are the most desirable for the majority of designs. The best is that sold in balls at fourpence-halfpenny or fivepence. I would warn workers that as the tints are apt to vary, it is advisable to buy at the first a sufficient quantity for the work to be undertaken, as, after some lapse of time, it is almost impossible to match.

It is quite impossible to convey through an ordinary illustration the beautiful effect of the ivory tint. It must be seen to be realised.

The individuality of the designs lies principally in the method, adopted both by the Irish and Bavarian peasantry, of continually stopping and turning back to get an effect, or import an element of novelty into a design. So far as I know, this is entirely foreign to the old-fashioned English procedure, which was extremely straightforward. It is just this novel method which makes it extremely difficult to explain the various patterns, or even to copy them from a worked article. The most satisfactory and expeditious plan is to buy designs which can be done in single stars or short lengths, and unpick a sufficient portion to make yourself mistress of the mystery of these little "wrinkles." When you have pursued this plan with two or three

patterns you will find you have entered into the "genius" of the work, and will easily be able to think out for yourself the way to copy any design that may present itself to you. If you are clever, you will find yourself, like the Bavarian peasants, inventing new ones.

These designs make exquisite toilet-covers for Duchesse dressing-tables, sideboard cloths, table runners, sofa cushion covers, berceaunette quilts, bed-spreads, etc.

The ivory canvas can be bought either by the yard, in all widths, or in squares, or prepared for the article intended to be worked. The borders are greatly improved by being drawn and worked after the fashion of the old drawn linen, which has been so greatly revived of late.

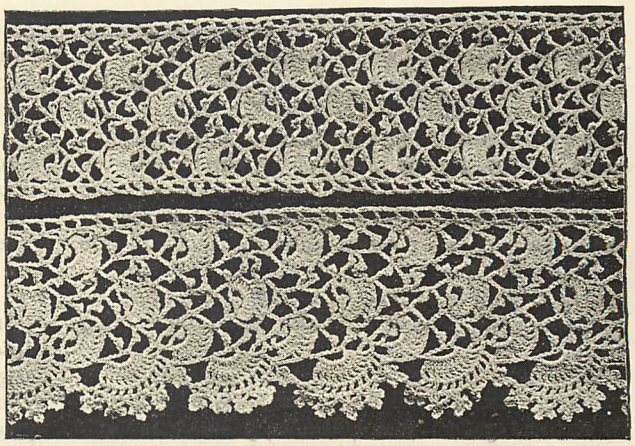


FIG. 3.—INSERTION AND EDGING SUITABLE FOR HOLLAND BLINDS.
(*From a specimen kindly lent by Messrs. Lee & Boyd, of Oxford Street.*)

This work is very tedious and difficult, and is done so exquisitely and reasonably (by machine, I fancy) that I should advise no one to attempt it herself, unless she is already an expert. The canvas may be further embellished by a species of embroidery, for which specially prepared ivory cotton is sold. There are two kinds: the twisted and the split. The latter is perhaps the easier to work with, and is very effective. Both kinds are coarse, and fill up well. Afternoon tea-cloths, toilet-covers, etc., can be bought ready traced with designs for embroidering or quite plain, as preferred.

Fig. 1 gives a specimen of a bed-spread in fine ivory canvas, the strips of which are both drawn and embroidered, the whole being edged with an effective border worked in No. 20 cotton. Fig. 2 is an exquisite design, composed of strips of drawn canvas, which can be bought prepared in similar width and numerous designs, interspersed with and surrounded by coarse crochet, worked in No. 16 cotton: suitable for table centre or cushion cover.

Fig. 3 gives an insertion and edging well adapted for the adornment of holland blinds, for which purpose it is far preferable to the Guipure laces generally used.

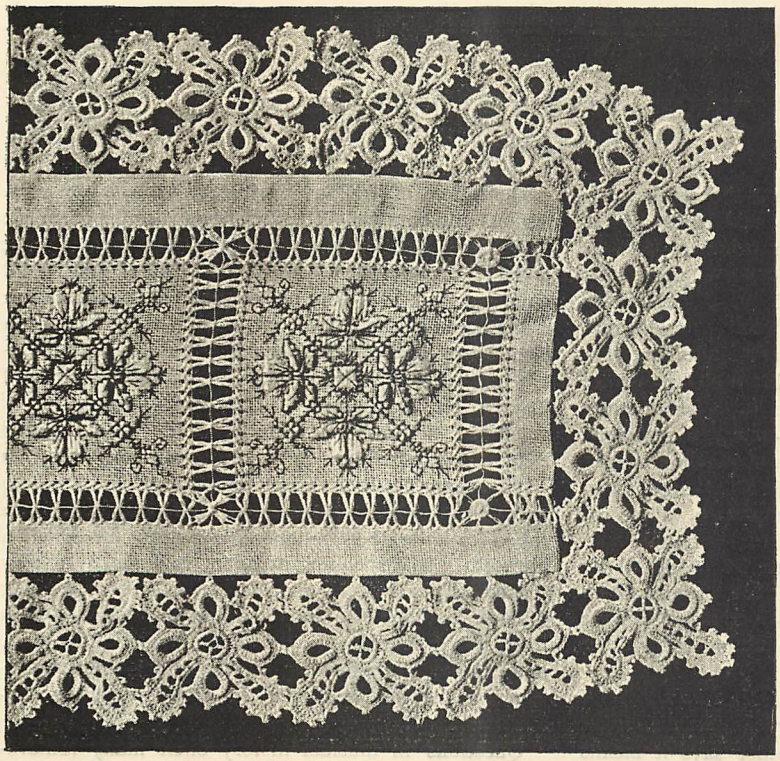


FIG. 4.—DUCHESSE SLIP OR SIDEBOARD CLOTH.
(*From a specimen kindly lent by Messrs. Bedford, of Regent Street.*)

Fig. 4 is a beautiful specimen of a toilet or sideboard cloth. The squares of canvas are drawn and embroidered in ivory cotton, outlined with blue and red ingrain cotton, and joined together with "drawn linen" stitches. The border being a very good typical pattern, we give a detailed description.

The number of the cotton used must depend in a measure on the coarseness of the canvas employed. No. 20 would be the finest, and No. 16 the coarsest, I would suggest.

Commence with 8 chain, work 1 treble into the first, 3 chain, 1 treble into the same chain as first treble was worked into, 3 chain 1 treble into same chain, 3 chain unite by joining with a slip stitch into 4th of the 8 chain.

2nd row: 7 double worked over the 3 chain, 1 double into the treble; repeat three times. There should be 32 double in all.

Now turn the work, so that the wrong side of what you have already done is next to you.

3rd row: work 4 double into the back of 4 double of last row, 17 chain, 1 treble into 6th chain, 2 chain miss 2 chain, 1 treble into 3rd, 2 chain miss 2 chain, 1 treble into 3rd, 2 chain miss 2 chain, 1 treble into 3rd, 2 chain 1 slip stitch into first of the 17 chain, 4 double worked into back of next 4 double of last row, 12 chain; *turn the work round,* unite the 12 chain into a loop with one slip stitch worked into first of the 12 chain; *turn the work back again,* work 20 double over the loop of 12 chain; repeat three times more.

Turn the work round. 4th row: work 1 double into the back of each of the 20 of loop, 2 double on 2nd and 3rd of next 4 double, 3 double into first hole, 1 double into the treble; repeat 3 times, putting *1 treble* into last treble before loop at top, into which work 10 treble, 1 treble into treble forming loop; repeat like other side; continue until the four loops and four points have all been worked over.

5th row: work 5 slip or single stitches into first 5 double surrounding loop, 5 double, 4 chain 1 double into same stitch, 4 double into next 4 stitches, 4 chain 1 double into 1st chain, forming picot, 1 double into 9th stitch of the long corner point, 1 double into next stitch; continue 1 picot 2 double nine times; after 9th picot work 1 double into 6th double of loop, and continue until worked all round. To break off, have a length of several inches of cotton, and with a darning or coarse crewel-needle work the cotton over and over (like over-sewing) between several of the last stitches; then cut off close, and no one will be able to detect your fastening.

I may add that I worked this pattern from the illustration given, though not without a mental working out of the problem first.

A word, in conclusion, as to the cost of ivory work. I need hardly say that this lies principally in the canvas. Duchesse slips can be bought from 2s. 6d., or even less; a handsomely drawn one costing about 4s. 11d. Four balls of cotton would suffice for an average border. A skein of cotton, costing 4d., would work a design in each corner. Such a Duchesse slip, worked by the writer of this paper, was sold at a bazaar in a by no means well-to-do neighbourhood for twenty-five shillings, and smaller pieces of work from fifteen shillings to a guinea were sold immediately. They were worked entirely in the odd moments of a busy life, and always in patterns like the one described above, which could be done in small pieces, and thus kept clean. Members of the family were apt to indulge in a little friendly "chaff" about the insignificant little piece of work that never got any further—so they thought. I must say that, as I have no talent for embroidery, a friend was persuaded to undertake this portion.

Great was the triumph of the worker when her completed articles were displayed in all their beauty, and were the very first things to be purchased at the charitable sale for which they were designed.

MORE MUSICAL EXAMINATION ODDITIES.

BY AN EXAMINER.

THE popular examinations in musical knowledge held twice a year by one of our principal musical colleges are causing thousands among the rising generation to concentrate their intellectual faculties on the acquirement of a much more thorough knowledge of the various branches of study comprehended under the generally-accepted but vague term "the theory of music," than was common twenty years ago. The efforts to attain this knowledge naturally produce results varying in proportion to the intellectual capacity or musical proclivities of those who make them. Thought is said to be produced by molecular action in the tissue of the brain. Some instances where the molecular action appears to have been somewhat eccentric are here chronicled for the delectation of our readers.

The well-known sign for a pause 𝄐 is thus explained by one of our young friends:—"It makes a longer silence than if it were not." Another says it means "stop for a 2nd," and another tells us that the sign is "to say they have to wait a little."

Definitions of Italian terms used in music are often curious and comical. *Tenuto* is thus variously defined: "One note not to be taken up till the next is put down;" "tentively;" "sung by a band;" and "hold on Davenport." It may be remarked that Davenport is the name of the author of a popular text-book on elementary music. *Stringendo* is thus explained:—"With a string," "erging on," "hurghing on," and "hurry on Davenport." *Cantabile* means, "in a colouring manner," "candidly," and "with sprite." *Non troppo* = "not much attention to time," *maestoso* = "majestly," *strepitoso* = "strepiditly," and *Da capo* = "in the head." Sometimes the candidates are asked to give the Italian equivalents for English phrases. "In a speaking manner" is rendered *affabile speakante, parlamente,* and *piacovely.* "In a singing manner" is done into Italian as *radallacendo.* "In a light, flying manner" = *frivolante, volatile, fuissimo,* and *arioso*; "dying away" = *mordante*; and "smothering the tone" = *pendoroso, smotheringo,* and *extinguisho.*

Questions in musical history elicit many remarkable statements. Thus we learn that Carissimi invented "putting short score into open or full score,"

that "the Dettingen Te Deum was performed at Crystal Palace, before George II.," that Handel "was appointed to the electorship of Hanover," and that his first opera was the Dettingen Te Deum, performed at Drury Lane. Bach is said to have been "attendant to Niccolo Porpora," and "director of Thomas School Company," and to have written a sacred choral work entitled *Les Fugues Whalapamire*. Haydn is described as "pianist to a comic actor," and is stated to have studied under Mr. Edwin Lott.

Candidates for senior certificates from a well-known musical college were recently asked to explain the difference between the flute commonly used in the orchestra up to the time of Handel and the German flute introduced by him. These are some of the answers:—"The German flute consisted of seven holes." "The old flute was more like a horn and harsher." "The flute used before Handel's time was not to be relied on for pitch." "*Flute à bec* was a wind instrument, and the flute introduced by Handel was a stringed instrument." "Handel greatly improved the flute by introducing into it more strings." "It had more notes, stops, etc." "The German flute went an octave lower than the former one." "The flute introduced by Handel gave a greater variety of tone by having holes." "In the former flute a large number of holes were employed in the side; these were dispensed with in the latter." "Had a mouthpeice (*sic*) the shape of duck." "It was really the old orbo, different in shape and shorter in compass." "The flute used in the orchestra up to the time of Handel was really the ancient theorbo, which had a different shape and a much smaller compass than the German flute introduced by Handel." The instrument here mentioned was the double or arch-lute, a stringed instrument played with the fingers like a guitar or banjo. Handel wrote an accompaniment for the theorbo to the air "The soft complaining flute" in his Ode on St. Cecilia's Day, hence the otherwise inexplicable connection of the theorbo with the flute in the minds of these candidates.

This explanation helps us to comprehend the following answer:—"Handel's German flute was smaller, and was capable of being played on with more expression, so was known as 'the soft complaining flute.'" Colonial candidates tell us that "in the German flute pistons were used," that "Handel used the double bass, the other was the treble flute," that "the *flauto traverso* introduced by Handel differed from the *flute à bec* in having the keys laid across, as the name implies," and one hapless individual, described by the local secretary as a sufferer from St. Vitus' dance, gives us to understand that "the flute used to be in the ancient binary form."

In another paper candidates were asked briefly to describe the theorbo. Here are a few of the descriptions:—"It was very much like a harp, but was laid down flat instead of standing up." "An instrument rather like the piano, and it was an enlargement on the spinet." "It was a kind of flute, with a narrow mouthpiece." "The theorbo is a kind of lute, with two mouthpieces." "The same as the basset-horn, having a small mouthpeice" (*sic*). "The theorbo was an alto oboe." "Derived from the oboe, for which it is sometimes used as the natural bass." "It is described as taking an intermediate place between the clarinet and bassoon." "I think it is the same as double bassoon, but have not met with that name." "A wooden instrument played with the mouth." "Another name for the cornet."

Efforts to render accurately the Latin name—*Tu es Petrus*—of a fugue for two choirs by Alessandro Scarlatti result in the following variants:—*Tu es Pedrus*, *Te us Petrus*, *Tu et Petrus*, *Tu est Petrus*, *Tu es Putrus*, *Tu es Patri*, *Tu es Petries*, *Tu es Pertrus*, *Tu est Pestrus*, *Deus es Petrus*, *Tues et Petrus*, and *Tu es Betrus*. The work in question is said to be still occasionally performed in St. Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Cathedral, the Crystal Palace, the Roman Catholic Church at Dresden, at St. Petersburge (*sic*), at Bayswater, and at Drury Lane.

Bach's immortal work, the 48 preludes and fugues, is described by one historian as "38 preluges and fuges," by another as a "figue in 36 parts," while a third says that the work consists of "music of two kinds. Joyful and sad kind of character."

The "Pasquinade," the "Ballarande," the "Gorilla," and the "Gig," are given as the names of ancient dances which are said to have been performed on an instrument called the "Bayton-Gamblo."

One more historical oddity must conclude the present selection. Dr. John Blow is credited with the composition of two anthems, respectively entitled "I am gone up," and "Lo, and I beheld, and I was in the spriet" (*sic*).

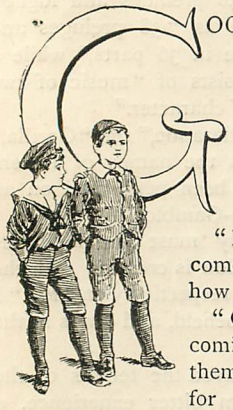
There is, as we who have braved the terrors of the examination room know from bitter experience, a peculiar state of extreme nervous excitement analogous to stage-fright into which candidates are very liable to fall; when in this condition the mind is unconscious of all surroundings save the awful problems to be solved and the remorseless ticking of the clock. Is this the state described in the last quotation by the phrase "I beheld and I was in the *spriet*"? The experience of some of those geniuses whose exploits are recorded in this article might be summarised by slightly varying the last answer thus:—"I have gone up, and lo! and I beheld, and I have got ploughed."

E. BURRITT LANE, MUS.B.

OUR BELONGINGS: THE BOYS.

The Boy who hates Girls

The boy who likes girls



"GOOD-BYE, dear! I really am sorry for you!" said my friend, Madeline Hay, as she rose from her comfortable chair, put down her tea-cup, and gave me a parting kiss.

"Sorry for me, dear! Why?" I asked with surprise.

"Did you not tell me the boys come home on Thursday? I *know* how dreadful it is!" was her reply.

"Oh, yes! They are all three coming, but it isn't all woe to have them," I answer, somewhat nettled; for although one likes a good grumble about the racket the boys make, and the length of the holidays, it is not quite agreeable to have the creatures talked about as if they were pests. When I had seen Madeline into her pony-cart, and waved my hand for the third time in answer to those farewell gesticulations so many women are fond of keeping up, I came back to the drawing-room; and as it was too hot to go into the garden, I sat looking at the purple shadows of the beeches on the lawn, and thinking of my boys, and how merry their voices would sound next week, and what laughter, and scoldings, chatter, and squabbles, there would be in the old garden. The boys! what queer creatures they are, with their extraordinary reticences, their remarkable frankness, their strange ideas of fun, their code of honour, the peculiarities of their tempers, and the varieties of their dispositions. They are exacting, but soon pleased; easily annoyed, quickly pacified; sensitive, and yet very thick-skinned. Whatever they are, the house is a changed place, when, with their lumbering boxes, their slang and their chaff, they come home for the holidays.

Do you not know the boy who hates girls? How disagreeable he makes himself when they are about; sometimes he hides, sometimes he sulks, occasionally he absconds altogether, when perhaps Aunt Maria and his three smiling cousins are come for the day, and wish to talk to, and play with, James. No James, or at best a very ill-mannered one, is forthcoming; and James's mother is well aware that Aunt Maria will for ever have a very poor opinion of her method of training. Then there is the boy who loves girls; he is at his best when Emily, and Lucy, and Mabel, and Gladys, are to be entertained; he is so careful about damage to their crisp print frocks; so thoughtful in finding the best racquets and the nicest balls for tennis; so attentive with the strawberries and cream, and so sweet-looking in his Eton suit or his spotless flannels, that his mother is filled with pride and joy. We are apt to laugh at the boy with a poetical

The Poet

twist in his mind, and to think his fondness for beautiful sunsets, "lush" greenery, and the loveliness of spring, rather humbug, and we sometimes trample over heavily on the verses we find, where the lines won't scan, and the rhymes are far-fetched and uncomfortable.

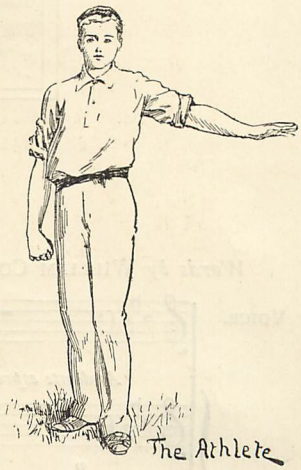
The Grumbler.

Who does not know the grumbler? Nothing pleases him. If we are going to have a pic-nic, he prophesies rain; if the little ones are happily playing he shows them what rubbish amuses them; he complains of the dinners, the drives, the cricket, the sunshine, the rain, the cold, the heat. Everything comes amiss to him, and his past, present, and future are alike distasteful; one is sorry for this boy, and foresees that life will hold sharp discipline for him.

Then there are the boys who amuse themselves from morning till night, without trouble to any one,

The Naturalist

who appear at breakfast clad in some ancient suit and carrying a large tin for insects and treasures of the like kind. Given a small bag of sandwiches, and a great stick with a net at the end, the naturalist will betake himself to the woods and streams, the ditches and dells, and will only reappear at dinner-time, very dirty and tired, but as happy as a king. One envies these lads, to whom a sixth sense seems to have been given, and who find in Mother Earth an inexhaustible treasure-house. Then there is the athlete, who knows all about the forthcoming sports and matches within twenty miles of home, and whose only tribulations are the sins of the laundress, who will not send home his flannels quickly enough, and the irritation of the trains, which do not always suit his needs. If a pony, or a tricycle, or the use of a dog-cart be accorded him, this variety of boy will not weary us with too much of his society in the holidays. Then we have the "masher," to whom clothes are a subject of interest—who knows all about ties, straw-hats, "toppers," and boots and shoes; he is aware what is the proper kind of tweed for his morning suits, and the correct cloth for his Eton jackets. This species is not very common, and it strikes one with wonder to see his bottle of pink hair-oil, his perfumed soap, his hair-brushes, and the starchiness of his linen. More familiar, by far, are we with the "grub," who possesses not one tidy set of garments, whose buttons never keep on, whose clothes never fit, whose hands are for ever dirty, and whose boots never take a polish. His hair will not part; he cannot find his gloves; his caps have broken peaks, and his hats have been sat upon; his jerseys go into holes, and his flannels shrink abnormally. He never cares, or wishes to be different now, but we believe a time will come when all this is changed!


The Athlete

The dunce is a tiresome specimen. He cares neither for classics, mathematics, geography, history, nor literature. He is always at the bottom of his class, and does not feel any humiliation at his position. His father lectures, his mother puts away the term reports with a sad sigh, but still the dunce goes on his way unmoved; and, oddly enough, does not seem to outsiders the ignoramus the verdict of masters and companions announce him. He must absorb knowledge by his pores, for he is often possessed of a large amount of general information, and he does not come out so badly in the school where men are scholars.

The "grind," too, is a boy whom we know well. He is continually in the front rank, and the hours he works, the books he "does," and the place he takes, are known afar. Cricket and football have no charms for him; the world may be bathed in sunshine or hidden in fogs; all outer things are shadows, his companions are the myths and men of olden time; and the queries of Euclid, the intricacies of algebra, or the charms of dynamics, are to him the only realities. His boyhood rushes by as he sits surrounded with his books and papers, his hand holding a pen in place of a bat, and his busy brain solving problems and construing hard passages, instead of scoring

The Dunce

runs and considering records. His father wonders at, and his mother delights in, the "grind," while friends prophesy either the Woolsack or an exhausted brain for him in the future, according to their dispositions.

Who invents boys' argot? Why should a "decent dinner" mean the same as a "ripping spread"; and "don't get hairy," or "keep your hair on," be used instead of a request "not to cut up rough"? What is a "scut"?—a "swag"? What induces a boy to ask another to "bunk," to "mizzle," to "vamose"? Who can say?

But whatever they do, we love our boys. We wonder at them, we fear for them, we wish they would alter; we would not have them change; they plague us, they upset us, they are selfish, uncomfortable, and delightful, and we use our best endeavours to render their lives happy, and to make them good and useful inhabitants of this workaday world.

Love's Conquest.

Words by WILLIAM COWAN. *Music by* BERTHOLD TOURS.

VOICE. PIANO.

Andante espressivo (♩=100).

I pressed thy trem-bling arm, sweetheart, Fond - - - ly I pressed; And in that ten - der hour love's reign Our thoughts con-fessed: ..... It seemed as if the vast sweet

f *p*

night Was filled with in - fi - nite de - light. The

f *decres.*

ra - diant moon and all the stars Watched far a - bove; They looked in -

p

- - to our eyes and saw The heaven of love: ..... And earth, and

p

f

air, and star, and moon, With a new glo - ry round us shone.

f

p

I felt, and thou..... didst..... feel, ...

p

sweetheart, The tide of bliss.....

p *mf* *f*

Flow-ing with - in, and lip to lip Gave the

p *cres* - - - - *cen* - - - - *do.* . . . . *f*

warm..... kiss..... We whis - pered,

mf *mf*

f *ff*

"In love's light we shine,..... Like the sweet stars,..... my heart.....

f *ff*

..... as thine."..... *decres.* . . . . *f* *f*

THE DOCTOR'S BLUNDER.

BY JOHN K. LEYS, AUTHOR OF "THE LINDSAYS," ETC.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

ALL day long the snow had been falling, not in large flakes but in tiny particles, which fell to the earth rapidly, as if they came with a purpose, and were as rapidly succeeded by others. This had gone on till even the exposed places in the bare fields were covered to the depth of a foot, while in the hollows and the sheltered lanes the snow was fifteen to eighteen inches deep.

If it had been possible for some denizen of the air to have scanned miles of these deep, secluded roadways at a glance, he would have seen but one creature toiling through that mass of snow; and that creature was Dr. Brancepeth's stout cob. The doctor, a hale and vigorous man in spite of his sixty years, was on the cob's back.

"Cheer up, Prince, we shall soon be there, you know," cried the doctor, patting the horse's neck with his numb gloved hand.

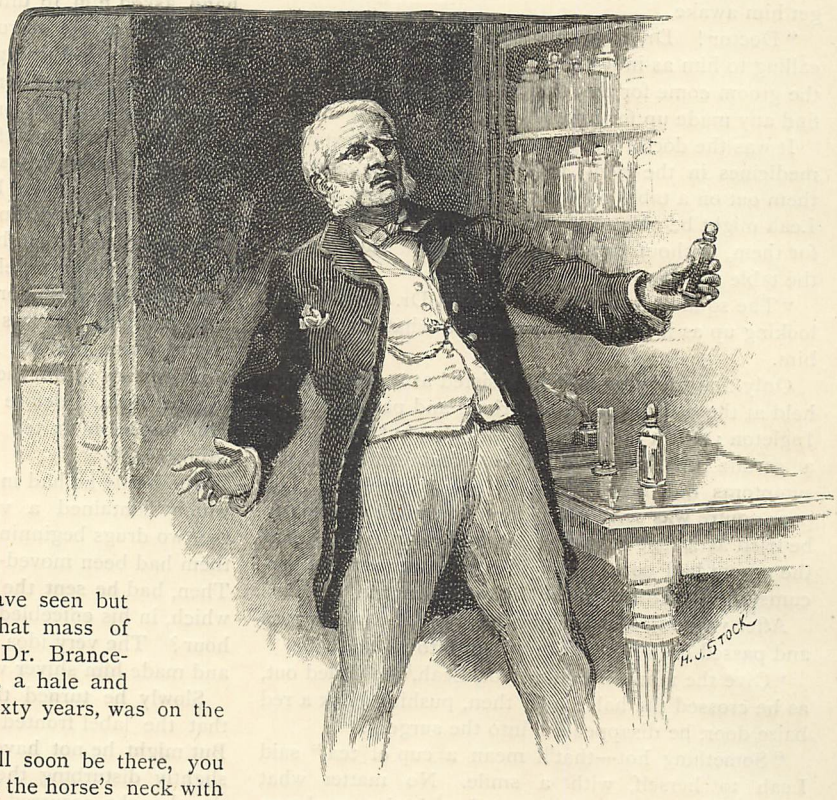
It really seemed as if the animal caught his master's meaning; he tossed his head and plunged along vigorously, making steady though slow progress. The long light of the March evening had faded, and the twilight had passed into unmistakable darkness, before the lights of the little town of Overton came in sight, and the doctor's cob turned of his own accord up the avenue that led to his stable.

The groom was hanging about the stable-yard, and after giving him a few directions respecting Prince, Dr. Brancepeth went along a narrow path which had been shovelled in the snow to the front of the house, and let himself in with his latchkey.

No pattering feet ran to meet him, no woman's voice fell on his ear, for the doctor had been a widower nigh sixteen years, and his only daughter was still at school. But the fire in the dining-room burned strong and clear, and if the hearth was lonely, the table-linen was spotless, and the dinner cooked to a turn. The doctor managed to get off his thick coat and gloves, and then walked heavily, letting his wearied body fall first on one foot and then on another up to the fire-place, where he sank into an old leathern easy-chair.

"Your hot water's up, sir," said a voice at the door.

An acquiescent grunt was the reply.



"HE GAVE A CRY—A LOUD, DESPAIRING CRY" (*p.* 474).

In less than two minutes the summons was repeated.

"Shut the door, Leah; I feel the draught," the doctor called out.

"The dinner's spoiling, sir," said Leah, a tall spare woman, the doctor's housekeeper, coming into the room. "Hadn't you better go upstairs now, sir?"

"I suppose so, but upon my word I am too tired to stir. I feel dead beat. Give me a cup of tea, then; and I'll try to get upstairs."

Leah did not approve of tea before dinner, but she gave her master a cup as a concession to his weakness, and he managed to stumble upstairs.

For two nights in succession Dr. Brancepeth had had to sit up with those who needed his help, and this deprivation of rest, joined to the long hours spent in the saddle, had tired him out.

He ate his dinner, thinking now and then of the gentle form which long years ago used to sit opposite to him at that same table, and sometimes of the saucy little girl who was coming back "for good" in July, to be mistress of the house.

After dinner he sat down without rebuke from Leah in the great chair, and his face wore a smile as he thought of Marjory, and her naughty tricks and her

sweet penitence, and how like she was to her mother. This was the last idea in Dr. Brancepeth's mind before he fell asleep.

So deep was his slumber that Leah had to take him by the shoulder and shake him, before she could get him awake.

"Doctor! Dr. Brancepeth!" he heard her voice calling to him as in a dream. "Wake up, sir. Here's the groom come for the squire's medicine, and I can't find any made up for him."

It was the doctor's custom to make up the next day's medicines in the early part of the evening, and lay them out on a table set apart for the purpose, so that Leah might be able to give them to anyone who called for them, without troubling the doctor. But to-night the table was bare.

"The squire's medicine!" echoed Dr. Brancepeth, looking up as if he hardly understood what was said to him.

Only that morning he had assisted at a consultation held at the bedside of his old friend and patron, Squire Ingleton; and it had been decided that in twelve hours a certain medicine was to be administered, if the symptoms did not change in the meantime. The poor squire was seriously ill, and the medicine was to be tried as a last resource. It was for this drug that the groom had come; and in a few seconds the circumstances recurred to the doctor's memory.

After yawning and rubbing his eyes, the doctor rose and passed out of the dining-room into the hall.

"Give the man something hot, Leah," he called out, as he crossed the hall; and then, pushing back a red baize door, he disappeared into the surgery.

"Something hot—that'll mean a cup of tea," said Leah to herself, with a smile. No matter what the weather was, she disapproved of letting workmen or messengers have anything stronger than tea. William Dance, the groom, eyed the tea with a look of sovereign contempt; but he drank it off, and sat down with a discontented air to wait for the medicine.

In a few minutes it was ready, and handed over to Dance, who set off on his six miles' ride through the snow. The storm had now abated; but a few flakes of snow were yet falling, and the sky was dark as a cavern.

"I ought to make up those medicines," said the doctor to himself, as he turned over the leaves of his note-book by the light of his solitary candle; "but really I feel too sleepy. It's not at all likely that any of the other patients will send for their stuff on a night like this. Let's see! Past nine! I'm off to bed."

He went into the hall, called his housekeeper, and telling her that he was half dead with fatigue charged her that he was not to be roused except on the gravest necessity. He then went upstairs, and in ten minutes was once more sound asleep.

The next day about eight o'clock Dr. Brancepeth opened his eyes, greatly refreshed in mind and body. His first thought was of Squire Ingleton. Was he better? Had the medicine administered the night before served its purpose? He felt as if he would have liked to spend the whole day at Mr. Ingleton's bedside; for Dr. Brancepeth was one of those persons whose gratitude does not become cool with the lapse of time. Thirty years before, when Dr. Brancepeth had come to the parish of Overton, a poor and almost unknown man, Mr. Ingleton had taken him by the hand, asked him to dinner, and introduced him to all the people of the surrounding neighbourhood. This had proved the turning-point in the doctor's career; and he had never forgotten that it was to Squire Ingleton he owed his present prosperity.

After a hasty breakfast Dr. Brancepeth went into his surgery to begin his postponed task of making up the medicines which he had in his own mind prescribed on the preceding day. He had got half way through his list when, having occasion to reach to an upper shelf, his eye fell on the bottle from which he had taken the dose for Squire Ingleton on the preceding night. It was a little out of its usual and proper place, the gilt label being turned a little too much inward; and the doctor stretched out his hand to set it right. Before he had time to touch it a horrible suspicion darted through his mind. It was the wrong bottle!

The bottle he had intended to use stood next to one which contained a virulent poison—the names of the two drugs beginning with the same letters. One of them had been moved—the one that held the poison. Then, had he sent the squire a deadly potion, a drug which, in his enfeebled state, would kill him in half an hour? The very idea checked the doctor's breathing, and made him shiver with fear.

Slowly he turned the bottle a little way round, so that the label fronted him. Yes: it was the poison. But might he not have used the right bottle after all, slightly disturbing the other as he replaced it? As the thought occurred to him, he took the two bottles down from the shelf and examined them, trying to remember which of them he had used the night before. Mechanically he put his hand first on the one glass stopper, and then on the other. As his hand touched the second he gave a cry—a loud, despairing cry. The stopper of the bottle containing the poison was loose; the stopper of the one which held the drug he had intended to give, the medicine, was fast jammed in the neck of the bottle. Try as he might, the doctor could not loosen it with his fingers. This was clear, certain evidence that he had unintentionally, yet with most culpable, shocking carelessness, given his patient and friend a draught that must have killed him.

The doctor staggered to one of the cane-bottomed chairs that were in the room, and fell down on it, put his elbows on his knees and let his head fall between his hands. He felt as if his heart would burst; as if tears, or a prison—anything, would be a relief. To think that by gross and inexcusable carelessness he had sent to his grave the man to whom he was bound by every tie of gratitude; to think that he had made that man's wife a widow and his children fatherless! The thought seemed to take from him the power of thinking and acting.

Then, after a time, the idea pressed itself upon his mind—"Why am I sitting here? It is *possible* that

the medicine may not have been given and I *may* arrive in time to prevent its being taken. It is even barely possible that the drug may not have acted as it usually does. If I were at the Hall I might be of use."

He sprang to his feet, rushed to the stables, threw the saddle on his horse with his own hands, swung himself on its back, and urged the faithful brute along the snow-burdened road.

But before he had gone half a mile he saw a man coming towards him—a man whom he recognised. It was William Dance; and at the sight of him the doctor's heart sank. He could ride no further, but let Prince stand still while the other drew near.

The man touched his hat. The doctor looked his inquiries; he could not speak them.

"Mrs. Ingleton sent me on, sir, to meet you and spare you coming out to-day, as she was sure you must be worn out. It's all over, sir. The master died last night."

It seemed to Dr. Brancepeth as if his heart would stop beating; a keen physical pain shot through it, as the tidings reached his ears.

"Did he get the medicine? Were you in time with it?" he asked in a strange, constrained voice.

"Yes, sir."

"You are sure?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long did he live after the time when he took the drug—after the time you got back, let us say?"

"It might be half an hour, sir, from that to an hour," answered William, after a moment's reflection.

"Ah, well," said the doctor, turning away, "it can't be helped now—I mean, of course I can't be of any further use. Tell your mistress I am much obliged to her for considerately sending to meet me."

He turned back to his own house; and even in the turmoil and horror of his thoughts he remembered that he had not given the squire's servant anything for his trouble. He wheeled his horse round—rather a difficult operation in the snow—called after Dance, and gave him half-a-crown. Then he turned back to his own home.

Throughout the morning, and all through that day and the next, and for many days after, the same thoughts held possession of his mind, and were always present with him. During his lonely rides, by his solitary hearth, even in sick rooms, he was thinking: "My hand killed John Ingleton." "But he might have died in any case," he would answer to himself, and the pitiless reply came: "But he might have recovered; and you have killed him." Then, strive as he might against such thoughts, dreadful pictures would crowd into his imagination. He thought of the joy of the dead man's widow if her husband had recovered; and with a morbid sorrow that he could not control, he pictured the squire in the different stages of recovery; now he would have been able to sit up in his room, now he might have ventured downstairs, and now he might perhaps have been enjoying that sweetest of draughts to an invalid, a breath of the pure unconfined air of heaven.

At first he felt certain that there would be an inquest, and he lived in momentary expectation of arrest. Then he saw that there need be no inquest if he chose to sign the usual certificate of death; and after a long debate with himself, he signed it.

He forced himself to call and see the widow and her family, but he felt that for him to go to the funeral was impossible, so he shut himself up the day before the interment, and pretended to be ill.

After all immediate danger of detection and punishment had gone by, he began to torment himself in a new way. Was it not his duty, he asked himself, to confess his fault and give himself up to the police? Would he not be a better and a happier man if he confessed and suffered the penalty, than he would be if he kept the guilty secret in his own breast? He had a feeling as if the crime might in some sense be atoned for in that way. "I have been guilty of manslaughter," he would say to himself. "It was not a pure accident. I had no business to make up medicine when I was half asleep. I ought to have roused myself. I have shed man's blood. Whose? John Ingleton's! The blood of my old friend, the man who stood by me when other friends I had none. I ought to be in prison; but as it is, my punishment is great."

Once he was actually on his way to the police-station to give himself up, when the thought of his daughter came into his mind. If he spoke this word that he intended to speak, she would be known all her life as the daughter of the doctor who was so many months or years in gaol for manslaughter. Her life would be ruined, almost before it had begun. He could not do that.

But he could not bear to meet any of the Ingleton family. The very sight of their black dresses made him shudder. Mrs. Ingleton's kind sad smile went to his heart like a knife. By degrees he became more accustomed to the company of these unhappy thoughts, but at the same time he became more hard, gloomy, and self-centred. Everybody noticed the change, but the doctor took care that no one should from any word or look of his form a guess as to its cause.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

THREE years went by, and time seemed to do little to lighten the weight on Dr. Brancepeth's mind. He was apt to be morose, absent-minded, and melancholy, a different being from the cheery old man he had been. The only one who could win him from his melancholy humours was his daughter Marjory. She had been the living sunshine of his house ever since her return from school.

It was a June evening, and the doctor paced impatiently up and down his dining-room, glancing now and then out of the window to see whether Marjory were coming. She had been at a tennis-party at the Rectory, and the doctor thought, rather unreasonably, that she ought to have been home half-an-hour ago.

At last she appeared, walking slowly up the garden-path that led to the Rectory. But she was not alone. A man in tennis costume—young Squire Ingleton—was by her side. They were walking very slowly,

"WHEN HER FATHER LOOKED AT HER, HE THOUGHT SHE WAS ABOUT TO FAINT" (*p.* 477).

the girl's eyes were bent on the ground, as if to avoid the gaze which her companion fixed on her face.

A groan burst from the doctor's lips.

"I might have foreseen this!" he cried aloud, as he hurried to get his hat, and went out to meet the advancing pair.

"You are very late, Marjory," said her father, almost sternly. "Good-evening," he added, with a nod to her escort.

"It is not very late; I was one of the first to come away," answered the girl.

"Mrs. Miles ought not to have allowed you to remain on the grass after the dew began to fall," replied the doctor sharply.

Marjory might have said that for the last hour they had been in the Rectory drawing-room, but she thought it better to say nothing more, and slipped into the house, leaving her father and lover—for now she knew that Guy Ingleton loved her—together.

The young man expected that he would have been asked to step into the house, but the doctor made no sign in that direction. He strolled on towards the main entrance, and Guy, with a last look at the door through which Marjory had vanished, was fain to follow him.

The two walked on in silence for a minute or two.

"Do you ride or drive home?" asked Dr. Brancepeth.

"I shall walk," answered the squire.

"It is a long way."

"Only six miles."

"Then, if you are going to walk, I mustn't detain you," said the doctor coldly.

"I am not in any hurry," said the squire; and then

seeing no way of leading up to his subject, he plunged into it at once.

"I wanted to have a little talk with you, doctor, to-night. The fact is, sir, I am in love with your daughter Marjory. I love her, I will not say as she deserves to be loved, but with all my heart. She is all the world to me. Have you any objections to my asking her to marry me?"

"Yes."

Guy looked up quickly. Did the doctor mean that he *had* objections to the match? Surely not. Yet his tone was far from conciliatory.

"Do you mean, sir——?" he began.

"I mean that I *have* objections, very strong objections to such a marriage. It cannot be. It is impossible."

Ingleton could hardly believe his ears. He could not help knowing that the position he was offering Marjory was a far better one than the old man could reasonably have expected for his child.

"I hope, sir, you have nothing against me personally?" he said, with a touch of pride in his voice.

"No."

"Nor against my family?"

"No; it is much better than my own."

"What is it, then? Why do you object to our marriage?"

"I am not obliged to give you my reasons. It is enough that I do object, most strongly."

"If you fear that Marjory would not be well received, I assure you that my mother is prepared——"

"Ah! You have been talking it over, then? But it doesn't matter. You and Marjory can never come together. I ought not to have allowed you to meet—but that could hardly be avoided, and I could not tell that you would be foolish enough to fall in love with her. Never mind. Take my advice, sir—leave home for a time. By and by you will meet some other girl. After a time you will forget her."

"Never!" cried Guy, in a voice that startled the old man. "Doctor Brancepeth," he continued in a softer tone, "let us be frank with each other. What is it that has raised up a barrier, as it were, between you and us, ever since my poor father's death? You and he were such friends, that were it only for his sake, we hoped the old intimacy would have continued. But it has not. You have been cold and distant. You have not seemed to care for Marjory and my sisters being together. Have we slighted or offended you in any way? If so, I am heartily sorry for it."

"No, Mr. Ingleton, I have nothing to complain of. The fault has been entirely on my side. But I cannot speak of it further. You must excuse me. I think I will go in now. But put all thoughts of a marriage between you and Marjory out of your head. I am sorry for you both, but it can never be. Good-night."

Dr. Brancepeth did not go indoors as he had said he would do. For more than an hour he remained pacing up and down the path which Guy and Marjory had traversed together. "No," he was saying, in answer to some appeal within his own breast, "no; my old friend's illness was not fatal. He might have recovered. He died by my hand. If his son knew—if Marjory knew—and I dare not tell them. Oh, Ingleton, my friend, I wish I had died in your place."

From such morbid and gloomy thoughts the doctor was seldom free. He might have stayed there half the night, had not Marjory come out and entreated him to come in.

"Young Ingleton has been speaking to me," he began abruptly.

"Has he, papa?"

Marjory's hand trembled on her father's arm, and she turned towards him, laying her forehead on his shoulder.

"And I have told him, my child, that such a marriage is impossible. It must *never* be. You understand that, my girl?"

Marjory was very still. When her father looked at her, he thought she was about to faint.

"He ought not to have said anything to you," he began angrily. Then, remembering how naturally they must have taken his consent for granted, he stopped himself.

"But we—we love each other, papa," she stammered out.

"Child, I tell you it cannot be. Perhaps, when I am on my deathbed, I will tell you my reason. You may please yourself then—when I am dead. But I think, if you did such a thing, the curse of the dead—not mine, but—another's—must fall on you."

They were standing in the hall when this was said. The only light came from the open door of the dining-room. The doctor could just see how white and wan the poor girl looked. She looked bewildered too—her father's words were incomprehensible.

"My poor darling," he said, and for a moment clasped her to his breast. Then the evil spirit that persecuted him whispered in his ear—"Remember, you are a manslayer. Your hands are red with blood. You are not fit to touch your innocent child."

Suddenly he set her free, went to his room, and locked himself in.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

GUY INGLETON followed Dr. Brancepeth's advice—he went abroad. A long letter, full of passionate words of love, came from him to Marjory just before he left home. She said nothing of it to her father. It was the one treasure she possessed, and she read it till she knew the position of every word as it stood on the page.

Three or four months after the squire's departure, the doctor and Marjory received an invitation to dine at the Rectory. Dr. Brancepeth, if left to himself, would have declined, but he saw that his daughter wished to go, in case Mrs. Miles should be offended by a refusal; and for her sake he agreed that the invitation should be accepted.

After dinner the doctor found himself left with his host at one end of the table. They were practically alone, for the ladies had left the room, and the other two male guests were engaged in a discussion which left them without eyes or ears for anything else.

"Do you think, doctor," said the rector suddenly, "that if a man commits a crime, he is bound to inform upon himself?"

Dr. Brancepeth started, and stared at Mr. Miles for an instant, before he answered—

"No, not in a general way."

"But suppose it was something serious, suppose you had, not wilfully, but through some negligence on your part, culpable negligence, mind you, some gross dereliction of duty—caused another man's death, would you think that you were bound to deliver yourself up to justice, and suffer the punishment due to your offence?"

"So you know!" stammered the doctor. "You know how the squire came by his death?"

"Yes, I know all about it."

"Who can have told you? I told no one."

"The man himself told me."

"What man?"

"Dance himself. And I am surprised that *you* should know about it. He told me he had never breathed a word of it to any living soul. Oh, I suppose you questioned Mrs. Dawson, and drew your own conclusions."

The doctor pressed his hand on his brow. His head seemed to be turning round; but he was sufficiently master of himself to see that the rector and himself were at cross purposes. It seemed possible that his fatal secret was his own still.

"I'm afraid I don't understand you, Mr. Miles," said Dr. Brancepeth, as steadily as he could. "We must be speaking of different events."

"Or else you are very cautious," said the rector with a smile. "You are quite right to be cautious, for it is a serious matter. However, I don't think there can be any harm in telling you Dance's story.

"The poor fellow came to me yesterday, and asked me the question I have just put to you—'Is a man bound to accuse himself when he has been guilty of a crime through negligence?' I said I thought not; and then it all came out. You remember that on the night poor Squire Ingleton died there was a great snowstorm. The doctors had ordered that he was to have a certain medicine at eleven o'clock at night, and Dance who was then the squire's head groom, was sent for it. He got it at your house, and on the way home, as it was a dreadful night, he turned into Mrs. Dawson's—Mrs. Dawson of the Pheasant, you know—for a glass of something hot. Unfortunately, there was an old friend of his there who stood treat, and Dance had enough to make him rather stupid. What with the snowstorm and the liquor, he went out of his way; and when at last he arrived at the Hall, it was only to be told that the squire had died a few minutes before. —What is it, doctor? What is the matter?"

The doctor could not speak. He put his elbows on the table, and hid his face in his hands. The burden that had weighed on him all these weary months had fallen from his shoulders in a moment. The deadly draught had never been administered!

"Dance was tormented by the thought that the medicine he failed to fetch in time might have saved his master's life. I see you think so too," said the rector gravely.

"No," said the doctor, raising his head. "I was certainly surprised to hear—what you tell me; but it would be impossible to say that the want of the medicine caused poor Ingleton's death. The disease must have taken an unfavourable turn during the day. Dance told me, when I asked him next morning," he continued, "that he had arrived at the Hall in time, and that the squire died about an hour after taking the—what I sent;" and the poor doctor groaned inwardly to think how much suffering had been caused by that one falsehood.

"Ah!" answered the rector, "no doubt he said that to avert a scolding—or worse, from himself. But I may tell him, may I not, that you do not think the medicine could have saved the squire's life?"

"Certainly you may," was the answer. "After all," added Dr. Brancepeth to himself, "the poor fellow could not possibly conceive the real meaning of my question. I ought not to blame him too much."

* * * * * *

Once or twice during the evening Marjory caught her father's eye. He was smiling at her, and looked as if he longed to speak to her. She smiled in return, but wondered inwardly. Nothing, however, could be said till the door of the rectory was closed behind them. They were passing through the path by which she and Guy had come from the tennis party. She always avoided it; but to-night she had not been able to do so.

"What is the matter, papa?" asked Marjory. "You looked so bright and happy when you came into the drawing-room, I thought you must have heard that someone had left you a fortune. You seemed ten years younger."

The doctor threw his arm round the girl's waist, and drew her to him.

"So I am, my dear—twenty years younger. And, Marjory, I am going up to the Hall to-morrow; and I shall tell Mrs. Ingleton that I have been under a misapprehension all these years—entirely my fault, you understand?—and that, if she cares to write and tell Guy to come home, I shall be delighted to see him."

"Oh, papa! Guy? Guy come home?"

"Yes, Marjory. And I see how it will be. You will run away and leave me. But I shall go and live over at Ingleton, so as to be near you. We shall have all sorts of plans——"

"Dear papa, you have made me so happy!"

* * * * * *

It all came about as the doctor had foreseen. Guy came home the moment he got his mother's letter, as fast as steam could bring him; and the wedding took place before Christmas.

Neither Mrs. Ingleton, however, nor her son, nor Marjory herself, could persuade Dr. Brancepeth to say why he had at first so firmly refused his consent to the match. The most they could get out of him was that he had been under a misapprehension, and that his delusion had arisen from a doctor's blunder.

A LAY OF BOAT OF GARTEN.

[BOAT OF GARTEN is a small village with a station on the Inverness Railway, halfway between Kingussie and Grantoun, where there is a ferry boat across the Spey leading to Nethy Bridge, a favourite haunt of tourists, who have an open ascent here up the river Nethy to the famous Cairngorm. Though Boat of Garten cannot compare either with Kingussie to the west, or Grantoun to the east, in respect of picturesque beauty and variety of outline, it stands in the centre of a mighty range of lofty bens, extending from Ben Rinnis, near Aberlour in Banffshire, to the heights above Loch Laggan, bordering on Lochaber in the far west. This magnificent crescent, with a broad purple moor in the foreground, skirted with dark pine forests and birchen slopes, gives the impression of the sublime of mountain solitude more strongly, perhaps, than any other part of the Highlands. Historically, this district cannot boast of having been the scene of any of the more notable events of the romance of Highland life in the days of the clan system; but at the close of the brilliant tragedy of the '45, it lay in the direct route of Prince Charlie, as he sped, after the battle of Falkirk, through Perth to Badenoch and Inverness, there to await the coming of the Royal force under Cumberland from Aberdeenshire, and find the death of all his hopes on the fatal field of Culloden. Local tradition still points to an old ruined castle, called Inverlaidnan, a little to the west of one of General Wade's bridges, three miles above Carrbridge, on the road to Moy Castle, the seat of the Macintoshes, and Inverness. Montrose, unquestionably the noblest name in Highland history, also after the battle of Inverlochy, crossed from Lochaber to Badenoch and marched down the Spey through Morayshire, and made himself master of Elgin. His future career belongs to the border country south of the Tweed, and far north in Sutherland at Loch Assynt.]

COME hither all who pine in dingy nooks,
Poring o'er inky scrawls and fusty books,
And breathe strong breath, and clear your cloudy looks
At Boat of Garten.

Come, sit down here, and feed your wondering eyes
On mighty Bens in crescent pride that rise,
And fence the moor with power and flout the skies
At Boat of Garten.

Not here we tread a curious-pictured floor,
With strange devices quaintly figured o'er,
But tufts of purpling heather clothe the moor
With grace at Garten.

And on each grassy slope the red, red rose,
With fringe of pendant blue-bells grandly grows,
To grace your bonnet and regale your nose
At Boat of Garten.

Or, if soft shade thee please at noontide hour,
To shield your cheek or ward the passing shower,
There waits for thee the fragrant birchen bower
That nods o'er Garten.

Here sit and gaze; or, if it move thee so,
Here sit and think on brave times long ago,
When friend loved friend, and foeman hated foe
Hotly at Garten.

Gordons and Grants and McIntoshes, all
Kilted, with kilted thousands at their call,
For clan and king all sworn to stand or fall
Not far from Garten.

Men like Montrose, when Time had rung the knell
For despot kings, who 'neath their potent spell,
With splendid error grandly fought and fell
Far north from Garten.

Or Charlie—though more brave than wise was he—
Who plunged in fatal strife with fearless glee,
And breathed strong breath of manhood, even as we,
In breezy Garten.*

Born with the blood that justly claimed a crown,
He with a smile met fickle Fortune's frown,
Bright as this summer sun when glinting down
On moor of Garten.

And came and saw, and looked with kingly eye
On loyal clans all sworn to do or die,
And stirred the land with joy from stormy Skye
To breezy Garten.

And fought, and bravely fought: but from his high
Conception fell, and saw with tearful eye
On blood-spent heath his true-sworn loved ones lie
Not far from Garten.

These men are gone: but we remain; and we
Breathe the same air, and tread the ground as free
In thought and act from Forth to Wells of Dee
And moor of Garten.

What though no balmy chain of light-winged gales
Wafts perfume here o'er rich vine-bearing vales,
Our mountains stand, and manly strength prevails
With them at Garten.

Let dainty foplings on soft couch recline,
To climb the crag and scour the moor be mine,
Where stormy gusts disturb the stout old pine
That fences Garten.

So be it ever! born a hardy Scot
And mountain-bred, I covet not their lot
Who roll in wealth, or in loose luxury rot,
Far south from Garten.

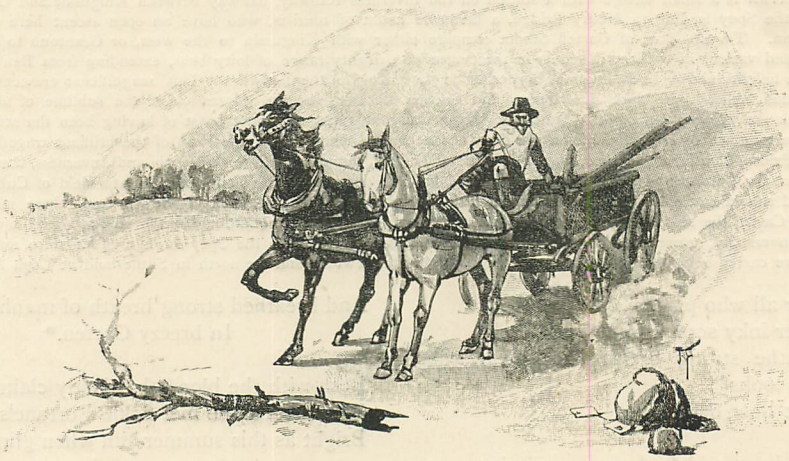
Not all things come to all, nor all men can
Use well what comes; but for a brave life-plan
No better nurse I know to rear a man
Than Boat of Garten.

JOHN STUART BLACKIE.

* The air of Speyside, from Loch Laggan downwards to Cluny, Kingussie, Aviemore, Boat of Garten, and Grantoun, is particularly exhilarating; and this virtue, with the consequent recommendation of medical men and the increasing facilities of railway travel, has operated largely, along with the charm of Highland scenery, in giving to the district here and there a touch of that grace and gaiety so foreign to the grey and grave architecture of Scottish villages.

PICKINGS FROM THE PRAIRIE.

BY WILLIAM TRANT.



LETTERS FOR POST.

THESE words are written in a log shanty, situated on the vast prairies of North-West Canada, a region that has been aptly described as the "Great Lone Land." I have not a neighbour to the north or west of me within a distance of sixty miles. Adjoining me on the south is an "Indian Reserve"—that is, some hundreds of square miles of prairie set aside by the Government for the home of the red man; and to the eastward of me, at distances varying from two miles to seven miles, reside ten families, forty-two persons all told, six of them being wives, and twenty-two of whom are young men and maidens, infants and children. These households, with myself and family, form the "settlement" about which I have taken up my pen to write. We are all English, with the exception of one family, which is French-Canadian. None of us are of the sort of persons that emigration agents and emigration literature describe as fit and proper persons to emigrate. Indeed, with the exception of one person, and the French-Canadian family already mentioned (who have been bred farmers), we are all of the kind whom the emigration office says had better stay at home. I have noticed this blunder, by persons who ought to know better, in other countries I have visited; and I have been assured by one who knows, that the City clerks have made the best diamond-diggers in South Africa. In "Our Settlement," as I will call it, one settler was trained as a surveyor, another as a lawyer, two have been clerks, two have been commercial travellers, one is a stonemason, and I have but just left the pen for the plough. It is seen, therefore, that a settlement is not, as is often supposed, a fortuitous concourse of Scotch crofters, Irish cotters, and the "residuum" of large towns. That there are many of these in Canada and the United States is true, but in this wide expanse of the North-West

IN THE NEW.

IN THE OLD COUNTRY.

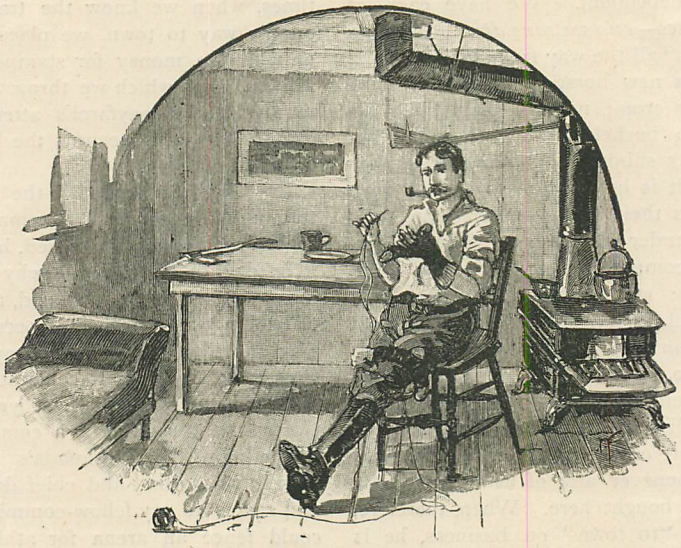
they are so scattered as to be but rarely seen in ordinary course.

This little batch of families, whom I will designate "we," becomes, very naturally, a community with identical interests. There is no trade rivalry amongst us, but, on the other hand, a sort of tacit co-operation, none the less real that it is not formulated. There is no social rivalry, for we have all the glorious privilege

of being equally independent. We have each of us our little weaknesses—*cela va sans dire.* A young girl with a new dress "all the way from Toronto"; a young farmer with a new horse; the man with the largest acreage under crop; none of them hides his or her light under a bushel, though there be but ten families to see its shining. As none of us has much to talk about, it is but natural to talk of one's neighbours, and it is their faults rather than their virtues that come under discussion. These, however, are little sins compared with the envy, hatred, and malice of towns; and are but ripples upon that ocean of mutual and reciprocal obligation without which our little community could not hold together for a moment. Take, for instance, the simple operation of shopping. Twenty-two miles from "Our Settlement," across the Indian Reserve already mentioned, is a cluster of two score of wooden houses; this is our nearest "town." Whenever any of us have to buy anything it has to be bought here. When, therefore, one of us is called "to town" on business, he is entrusted with the shopping for the whole settlement, and comes back with his waggon or buck-board laden with groceries, drapery, etc. Our mails are managed in the same way. This acts well enough during the summer, when we contrive a weekly visitation to the town; but in the fall, and during the long winter, we are often put to great inconvenience—first, because persons do not care to face the weather without adequate reason; or, secondly, the snow-drifts may have hidden the trail or rendered it impassable. I have known communication between the town and the settlement suspended for periods ranging from one week to five weeks. We then have to trust to any chance passer-by to take in our letters to the post office; and it is surprising, in the circumstances, how seldom a letter or a newspaper miscarries. Sometimes, when we know the trail a person will take on his way to town, we place our letters (stamped, or with the money for stamps) under a conspicuous stone, near to which we throw a tree across the trail to attract the wayfarer's attention. He knows the signal, dismounts, secures the letters, and takes them to post.

In "Our Settlement" the dignity of labour is thoroughly recognised. No man is thought the worse of because he works; indeed, he is thought worse of if he do not work. And why should it not be so? What with fencing, firewood, and logs for building, tree-felling is a principal occupation with us; and why should we be thought any the worse for doing from necessity what a celebrated English statesman does for recreation? Last year "Our Settlement" elected me treasurer of a committee for celebrating "Dominion Day," Canada's national holiday. I found that my first and chief duty was to carry posts and stakes to my fellow-committeemen, so that they could fence an arena for athletic sports. One of "Our Settlement" has just been made a J.P. Four years ago he was a stonemason in Cornwall, and he still works at his trade for two dollars a day. The same feature pervades all society out here on the prairie (note that I do not write all "grades" of society). The storekeeper from whom we buy our groceries is our member in the Legislative Assembly, and the keeper of a temperance hotel is our senator. This recognition of the "horny hand" is but natural. A man out here cannot be one thing and seem another. There is not sufficient privacy for that. All of us, having homesteaded, have equally had our farms given to us for nothing beyond a registration fee of ten dollars. The acreage each person has under crop is known to the rest of us; we can count his stock of sheep, cattle, and ponies. When he buys

"MANY WILL BE LATE" (*p.* 483).



"'BACHING' IT."

anything we know from whom he has purchased and the price he has given. When he sells anything, we know to whom and for what money. A man's financial status is as clearly known as J. Stuart Mill could have wished when he described the reluctance of persons to disclose their incomes as "a low state of public morality." This equality is inimical to the chatter of Mrs. Grundy, and, to my mind at least, is one of the charms of prairie life.

A feature peculiar to life in a settlement is "baching it," a short phrase for "bacheloring it." The men who live by themselves have to do everything for themselves. When a man "baches it," his shanty consists of but one room, generally built of logs. If he be a tidy and a cleanly man, he periodically scrubs his floor; he carefully stows away his bedding during the day, his cooking utensils are neatly arranged on his shelves, perhaps alongside a selection of the best books; his walls are decorated with the portraits of his relatives and friends, and by the latest pictures sent out from England; and his rough furniture, most of it made by himself, is, at any rate, clean. In such humble though tidy abode, the dashing young fellow who was a favourite in drawing-rooms, and the "best waltzer known," may be seen, pipe in mouth, mending his stockings (for he is a tidy man), or reading, or writing home, or kneading dough, or up to the arms in suds as he scrubs away at his fortnight's washing. There is, however, the very opposite of the above description—viz., the untidy man, with unkempt hair, unwashed face, linen a stranger to the washtub, the interior of his shanty all higgledy-piggledy. There is, however, much to be said to excuse this. The young fellow who has been hard at work all day is too tired to set to household work in the evening—too tired even to cook. Leaving his plough, or his axe, or his spade, just where he may happen to be (where it will remain until he next wants it), he is too tired to knead, so makes damper with or without baking powder; too tired to trouble about a roast, he will cut or chop off a piece of pork from a joint and cook it anyhow; he cares nothing about "tidying up"; neglects his ablutions; tumbles into his unshaken bed with his clothes on, and sleeps the sleep of the fatigued. The habit grows upon him: he becomes dirty both in appearance and in fact, slovenly in all he does; while his shanty, unswept and neglected, soon bears an abundance of living proofs that it is a stranger to the housemaid and the chambermaid.

The best way to "bach it" is for two to live together. One can then do the indoor work while the other attends to the farm, and they can vary the work by going "turn and turn about." Many do this, and live with all the ease of unconventionalists, and all the comfort of cleanliness. The two clergymen who take it in turns to visit "Our Settlement" live in this way. Both are graduates of English universities, and doubtless know what are the luxuries of life. And yet they "rough it," if roughing it consists of being one's own cook, washerwoman, chambermaid, and servant of all work. In summer, when they visit us, there is often no better bed for them than a haystack, and yet they say that they are happy and have no desire to return to the life of the old country.

The mention of clergymen presupposes public worship, and I can assure my readers that, out of the world though we be, we are not without that privilege. We have no church, it is true, but we have fortnightly visits from the gentlemen mentioned, and service is conducted and the communion administered in one or other of the shanties most conveniently situated. Nothing short of a blizzard keeps our worshippers away from these gatherings. The snow it shall snow, the wind it shall blow, and the thermometer not make up its mind whether to rise to

thirty below zero or fall to "forty below"; but still, there are bearskins and mufflers and fur caps, and the ponies can find the trails, however hidden; and snowdrifts are mere nothings (on service Sundays). And so our farmers come, three, four, five, and seven miles, to join in the worship of the Lord who loves us all. Of course, there may be delays, and many will be late; but the parson waits, until the tingle of the distant sleigh bells is heard, and the laggards are seen coming between the last bluffs, with signs of a breakdown or an upset, or some such catastrophe born of the rigours of the Canadian winter.

Not only have we "Our Church," so to speak, but we have "Our School." We are proud of our school, and we have reason and justification for the pride. The only rate we have to pay is a rather heavy one we have laid upon ourselves to educate the settlement's children. This has been done to build a school, which we have accomplished by borrowing $500—*i.e.*, £100—on debentures, repayable in twenty equal annual instalments. We gathered the stones ourselves from the prairie, hauling them with our waggons and oxen; our J.P. and his sons built the school with their own hands; and within the building "young Canada" is being educated. All these details may appear trifling, but it must be remembered that there are hundreds—nay, thousands, of such settlements on the North-west prairies. It is thus a nation is being formed, is concreting itself, so to speak, and the trustees of our schools, our J.P.'s and so on, are creating that municipal life which is the strength of a great nation. Literally, it is but one step from a log hut to Parliament House. I have had a glimpse of electioneering in Canada. I think the public meetings out here are conducted on a better plan than in England. In Canada the opposing candidates attend each others' meetings, and as long a time as one speaks is allowed to his opponent, and the succeeding speakers follow, one on each side alternately, the time at disposal being fairly divided between them. At the finish a show of hands is taken as to the fitness of each candidate. This statement of both sides of the question makes the meeting far more interesting than merely hearing one side, while it offers an excellent opportunity for examining and cross-examining the candidates.

"ALL THE WAY FROM TORONTO" (*p.* 481).

I have given above a short account of life in a Canadian settlement. It is a pleasant life, because it is as free as the air that blows across the prairie. Jack is his own master, and has only himself to consult and to please; and altogether it is a jolly life, notwithstanding that it is devoid of those pleasures and luxuries that constitute life in a great city.

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

THEIR happy paths that side by side
Went smoothly on, at last divide!
And now, with tender, fond delays,
Here, at the parting of the ways,
With long farewells, and hand in hand,
The lovers stand!

Once more they seem to tread again
The green, sequestered, quiet lane,
The banks by which the river ran,
And, where the leafy woods began,
The track—just wide enough for two—
Their footsteps knew!

They think, with heart to beating heart,
How soon their lives must drift apart!
Her faltering tones, his looks, declare
A truth that meets us everywhere,
That joy, though sweet, is at the best
A transient guest!

Duty, whose promptings fill our days,
Stands at the parting of the ways!
Follow its guidance unafraid,
And keep, true lover and fair maid,
In hope and patience close at heart,
Though far apart!

J. R. EASTWOOD.

FORMED FOR CONQUEST.

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

"The sun's away,
And the bird estranged,
The wind has dropped,
And the sky's deranged:
Summer has stopped."

AT the door stood Sarah, waiting to receive her.

"Oh, Miss! they haven't hurt 'ee?"

"No; but if you had not sent help they would have done so."

"What's all this fuss, Damaris? The whole house is upside down. Mr. Vanburgh was talking to me quite friendly and quiet, and Sarah rushes in and says they are killing you on the pier, and he jumps up and leaves me without a word, and Mr. Nixon after him. What's it all about? There's Helen upstairs: says she has a bad headache and won't come down; and you looking like a scarecrow, without a cloak and a face like chalk. Sarah's been crying and sobbing, and I can't make head or tail of what she says."

"Jim Trevarthick is dead: fallen from Cliff: and they say I pushed him over."

"What?"

Mrs. Lemarcham's voice rose to a scream.

"They think I killed him."

"You disgraceful girl! And you stand there and say it as calmly as though it was nothing. You've killed Jim Trevarthick! You'll be hanged! And what a disgrace that will be for your poor father and me!"

"I did not say I had killed him. I said the village thinks I have."

"It's all the same. You've been a trouble to us all your life—do you hear?—all your life. I hope your father'll turn you out of the house after this. I won't stay here with a murderess."

"Oh, Missus!" said Sarah.

They were standing in the passage, and Mrs. Lemarcham's shrill voice echoed through the small house. Helen, in her room, heard it, and opening her door, crept to the top of the stairs to listen.

"Hold your tongue, Sarah, or you shall go this very minute; I won't be cheeked by my servant. This is pretty news I have to tell your father when he comes in! Jim Trevarthick fallen from Cliff, and everyone says you've pushed him over."

Helen crept back to her room; she had heard enough. With dumb stony patience, Damaris waited for her stepmother to end. At last, Mrs. Lemarcham, tired of rating this silent, white-faced woman, and anxious to go out in the village to hear what was said, finished her tirade, and Damaris was free to go to her own room.

Worn out, exhausted with the strain she had gone through, she lay on her bed, and waited for her father's return. Surely he would not share the suspicions of Trentham, and believe his daughter had killed poor Jim?

In half-an-hour's time she heard his voice in the passage, and his wife's answering. But he did not come up to see her. She lay, in the cold winter's darkness, on her bed, with no covering upon her, as she had thrown herself when she entered the room. In the next room she could hear Helen poking her fire, and in the street the people passing up and down, too excited by the day's events to shut themselves up in their cottages for the night.

A timid knock sounded at her door.

"What is it?" she said.

"I've brought 'ee some tea, Miss. You'd no dinner, and you must be famishing."

"Come in."

"Lor, Miss! how cold you be; and the room's like ice. Drink your tea quickly: it'll warm 'ee."

"Does my father want to see me?"

"No, Miss."

The following morning a message was sent to Damaris that she was to stay in her room; she was not to come downstairs.

Sarah lighted a fire in the sitting-room at the top of the house, and thither Damaris betook herself and sat through the weary hours of the day. No one came to see her save Sarah, and she treated her with frightened pitying awe, which was not altogether comforting.

Did they think that she, Damaris, was capable of doing such a deed?—that she could push a man over the cliff in cold blood?

Damaris did not realise that her character, hidden beneath her cold, indifferent exterior, being unknown to the Trentham people, they would believe her capable of anything—thinking, like the rest of mankind, that what is hidden must be bad.

She wandered restlessly about the room; she looked out of her window, and saw her father coming up the street, his head bent, his upright pompous carriage of body drooping. Did he also suspect her? It seemed so; and yet it was impossible—it *must* be impossible—that she should be suspected of murder.

The hours passed, and voices came and went downstairs, but no one visited her. She was a pariah: an outcast. But there was surely one person who would not believe her to have committed this crime: one person who would not need evidence to know that she was innocent. Whatever might happen, Gerald Vanburgh would know she was not guilty. It comforted her to remember that.

Where was Sam? She thought he would have been the first to come to see her when she was in trouble. Perhaps her father forbade her being visited. And Mr. Rushton?—he who had known her all her life, who for years had been her friend: he would not believe she had committed a murder.

Sarah entered the room.

"Mr. Rushton wants to know if you'll see him, Miss?"

"Yes."

"Oh, Mr. Rushton!" she said, running towards him with outstretched hands when he entered the room.

He took her hands and kissed her on the forehead: a thing he had never done before. Caresses were not usual with him.

"My poor child, what is all this?"

She put him in the armchair, and told him the events of the day before.

"It is a pity you gave him that trinket. Not that there is any evidence against you—nothing to speak of—only those fools of fishermen are so pig-headed. Anyone could see it was an accident; I went to the cliff this morning. Of course he leans against the rotten railing; it gives way, and he falls."

"Poor Jim!"

The old man gave her a keen glance.

"You are a changed woman, Damaris. You are awake at last. I said you wanted a good shaking; or has the fairy prince come?"

A rush of colour flooded her pale cheeks.

"Hum! ha! that's it, is it? By the by, Vanburgh seems much interested in your case. He was at my door at an unearthly hour this morning to tell me the story, and nothing would do but that he must be off to London to fetch a good lawyer to defend you."

"I am Helen's cousin," said Damaris, in a low voice, turning her back on Mr. Rushton.

"I suppose so," he answered dryly. "I saw your cousin downstairs," he continued. "She was inquiring anxiously about the evidence against you. She showed more feeling than I gave her credit for, and she was looking white and haggard, but more beautiful than ever. If I were a younger man, I should marry her to have her always near me to look at."

"She is very beautiful."

"With as much soul as this stick! Well, Damaris, the coroner's inquest is to be held to-morrow afternoon. You will be called as a witness."

"Yes?"

He held out his hand to her.

"You are a brave woman, my dear, and you had better hear the worst. Those dolts, idiots, asses, will probably bring in a verdict against you unless some more evidence on your side turns up."

"What then?"

"You will be sent to Hallsburn."

"To prison?"

"Only for a time. Do not break down, my dear. There, I thought you would not. This great lawyer Vanburgh is fetching may manage to make the fools see sense, and you may not be sent to Hallsburn to appear before a magistrate."

"Does my father believe I did it?"

"I have not seen him."

Mr. Rushton did not add that Mr. Lemarcham was moaning over the disgrace his daughter had brought upon him, and vowing he would never see her again. He wanted to spare Damaris what he could.

He left Damaris comforted by his visit, and the knowledge that all her world had not forsaken her. One, nay, two men still believed in her innocence, and would believe though the evidence were twice as suspicious as it was.

She knew the worst, and she prepared herself to meet it. Gerald Vanburgh believed in her! What more could she want?

Sarah stared when, on bringing up a cup of tea for Damaris, she saw her seated before the fire, smiling happily. The smile faded, and a tired, hopeless expression succeeded, but Sarah pondered what that smile could have meant for a long time.

Damaris slept that night; she woke refreshed, and rose prepared to face the day with a brave heart and a quiet face. She was innocent, and there was scarcely any evidence against her. If the worst happened it would only mean a night at Hallsburn; she would be free when brought before a magistrate. Resolutely she turned her thoughts away from the odium, the notoriety, the discomfort.

Helen, meanwhile, restless, miserable, waited for the inquest. She intended to allow Damaris to be suspected, and, if the coroner's jury wished, to be committed for the supposed murder. Her inquiries of Mr. Rushton had convinced her there would be nothing to be feared for Damaris beyond disgrace and discomfort, and Helen could bear those for her cousin with the greatest equanimity. She would kill two birds by keeping silence: Damaris would suffer, and Gerald Vanburgh would cease to think of a woman who was suspected of having committed such a crime; for Helen meant that Damaris should all her life have that stigma upon her. If she did not come forward at the inquest with her evidence, she could scarcely bring it forward afterwards: the time for it would be past, and she would be bound to keep silence for her own sake.

Though Helen's determination was taken, she was not so unprincipled or hardened as not to be uneasy and restless. Jim's death had been a shock from which she could not recover immediately; she had cared for him in her fashion. The hours seemed as long to her as to Damaris; she wandered from room to room, and listened eagerly to the gossip Mrs. Lemarcham brought in from the village.

There was not a hint or a thought that Helen had been the last to see Trevarthick. No one dreamt of connecting the two, and she had not been seen on her walk to the cliffs. She would not be called upon to give evidence: she merely had to keep silence. But she could not be as hard-hearted as she wished, and the thought of the wrong she was to do her cousin would intrude upon her thoughts.

"If I am going to feel worried like this I shall have to come forward and give evidence. There is nothing like worry to age one," she said, looking in her glass. "I look years older than yesterday, I believe. I wonder if Damaris is very miserable."

At two o'clock in the afternoon, an hour before the inquest, she took a sudden resolution.

"I will see her, and if she is very miserable I will

tell," she said to herself, and she mounted the stairs to Damaris' sitting-room.

She was standing at the window, with her back to the door, and she did not look round on Helen's entrance, thinking it was Sarah to remove her uneaten dinner.

"I have come to see you," said Helen.

Damaris started, and turned at the voice.

She was thinner and her eyes were sunken, "but she is better-looking than she ever was; she is actually growing handsome," was Helen's observation, and the remorse and pity she had brought into the room faded from her heart.

"It is very kind of you."

The two women stood in awkward silence for a moment.

Helen hated Damaris at that instant; her resolution to be silent grew stronger.

"Sit down, will you not?" said Damaris.

"No, thank you; I only came to see how you were. You look better than I expected."

"I am not ill," said Damaris indifferently.

"Have you a lawyer to defend you?" asked Helen.

Damaris turned her head away, and Helen saw the red flush spread from her cheek down her white curve of throat to her linen collar.

"I believe Mr. Vanburgh has engaged one," she said in a low tone.

Helen's teeth caught her under-lip.

"Ah!" she said under her breath.

She certainly should not bring forward her evidence now. She only hoped the verdict of the inquest might be against her cousin.

"He will not look at you after that," she said to herself. "I know how particular he is about a woman's name."

"He is always kind," said Helen aloud. "Gerald is so good to people in misfortune."

Another flush passed across Damaris' face at this familiar use of his Christian name.

"He spends half his income in charity, I believe."

"It is very good of him," said Damaris, her head bent.

"Is there anything I can tell him from you? Anything you want?"

"Nothing, thanks."

They looked at one another, the old antagonism keener than before. The one despised the other, and the other hated because she was despised.

"Well," said Helen, "there seems nothing I can do for you. Good-bye; I suppose we shall not meet again for some time. I may be gone when you return, for Gerald will not like me to stay here after—you—have been suspected, and your name in all the papers, and——"

"Are you engaged?" interrupted Damaris.

"No, not yet, not quite. Of course it is only a matter of days; it is quite understood between us. Good-bye."

She went without a shake of the hands, and Damaris turned to the window again.

She could see down the street the people already beginning to flock towards the "Three Jolly Fisher-boys," the place where the inquest was to be held. A drizzling sleet was falling, and an east wind blew in cutting gusts through the street; but men and women, heads bent and hands tucked in their pockets or wrapped in their aprons, hurried down to the public-house.

Mrs. Vickers and Mrs. Harris stood with noses glued to their window-panes in the house opposite. Damaris could see them looking and pointing at her window during the intervals when passers-by were few. A third person joined them: Mrs. Matthews; and behind her Damaris saw Cissy Matthews, and Cissy was crying.

"Poor Cissy!" thought Damaris. "I did not know she was so fond of me."

It was a grand field-day for Trentham Cove. A funeral was the greatest event and the utmost dissipation enjoyed in Trentham; but here was a funeral, a murder, an inquest, altogether, and the supposed murdered man and his murderess were of their own village. Trentham was wild with excitement.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

"Scorned! See; I bleed these tears in the dark,
Till comfort come and the last be bled."

MR. RUSHTON came to take Damaris to the inquest.

"Are you ready?" he asked nervously.

He hated the whole affair but he could not let her go alone; someone must be there to stand by her side, and he knew her father would not.

"Yes, quite."

They went downstairs, and at the foot Damaris paused.

"I must see my father before I go," she said.

"I advise you not to do so."

But Damaris was resolved, and Mr. Rushton shrugged his shoulders and gave way.

Mr. Lemarcham was in the dining-room, Sarah said. Sarah followed Damaris about importantly. She felt that she enjoyed a reflected light by being able to tell the doings and looks of the heroine of the hour.

Her father was bending over the fire when she entered the room. He turned his head and stared at her.

"Father," she cried, running to his side, and kneeling by his chair, "father, you do not believe I could do such a thing?"

He shook off the hands she had put on his arm.

"You are a disgrace to my name!" he said huskily. "You will never come back to this house, let me tell you. I hope never to see your face again."

"Oh, father!"

"I shall never hold my head up again in this place," he continued. "Everywhere I shall be known as the father of the murderess. Go out of my sight, and let me never see you again!"

Damaris stood up, pale and silent, by his chair.

"You are a fool, Mr. Lemarcham!" said Mr. Rushton angrily. "Your daughter is innocent; there is no

evidence against her whatever; only these asses of fishermen choose to believe so."

"I am not accustomed to being called a fool in my own house," said Mr. Lemarcham, recovering some of his old pomposity.

"Time you were, then, if it brings you to your senses."

"If my father thinks me guilty, we had better go, Mr. Rushton," said Damaris, with steady lips, if pale. She looked back from the door, but Mr. Lemarcham was bending over the fire, poking it noisily.

"Good-bye, father," she said softly; but he pretended not to hear, and with a heavy sigh she opened the door and closed it behind her.

Her stepmother stood at the hall door; she stepped aside, and with a pointed gesture drew back her skirts that Damaris might pass.

Mr. Rushton, with a sardonic grin on his face and a courtly bow of his tall thin figure, passed her.

"Have Miss Lemarcham's clothes and books packed to-day, madam, and send them to my house. She will not return here again," he said.

"That indeed she won't."

"How deeply she will miss *you!*" he said, with a smile, and passed on.

"Courage, my dear girl, courage!" he whispered in Damaris' ear, as he put up his umbrella to protect her from the sleet. "Do not regard this *canaille*."

A small crowd outside the doctor's house waited for her appearance. They had been collecting to see her for the last half-hour, in spite of cold and sleet.

A howl and groan greeted her appearance, but Mr. Rushton need not have feared her courage failing. After the interview with her father the bearing of the crowd towards her mattered little. She was hardly conscious that the people were groaning and hooting at her on every side; but she met Cissy Matthews' pale face and blue eyes filled with tears fixed on her from Mrs. Vickers' window opposite.

"'Pon my soul! this is like escorting Marie Antoinette to execution," said Mr. Rushton as they walked down the steep street, followed by the yelling small mob. He was holding the umbrella carefully over Damaris, and picking his steps on the slippery cobble stones of the steep street. The mob followed with groans and hisses; a stone flew past Damaris' ear, but Mr. Rushton turned with such a savage face upon the people that the one stone was followed by no more.

Outside the "Three Jolly Fisherboys" waited the rest of Trentham folk. Damaris was hustled roughly as she passed through, but Mr. Rushton and a policeman prevented any further display of roughness, and perhaps Damaris' pale face and dauntless eyes awed them a little.

"Has Mr. Vanburgh come?" asked Mr. Rushton of his man-servant, who waited for them in the passage of the inn.

No, Mr. Vanburgh had not arrived but he was expected in half-an-hour. He could not be there possibly before; the fastest driving from Hallsburn could not bring him from the two o'clock train before half-past three.

He and the London lawyer, Mr. Norton, arrived in the middle of Damaris' examination; furious driving had brought them ten minutes before the shortest time allowed for the distance between Hallsburn and Trentham had elapsed.

The coroner had finished with Damaris, and members of the jury were putting inquisitive and useless questions to her when they entered the room. Damaris did not look at Vanburgh, though she knew what the bustle at the door meant, and saw the lawyer, Mr. Norton, speaking to Mr. Rushton.

At last she was allowed to go back to the room where the witnesses sat: the boy who had seen her on her way to Cliff, Mrs. Treleven, who had taken the gold hand from Trevarthick's dead fingers, Sarah to identify it, and the boatmen who had found him at the foot of Cliff.

Damaris' plain direct story of having met Trevarthick on Cliff, given him the trinket, and left him leaning on the rotten railings round the edge, impressed the coroner—a shrewd, sensible man. From the first moment he believed that the young man's death was due to an accident, and nothing else; but the jury of Trentham fishermen and small farmers of the neighbourhood believed otherwise.

Through the weary afternoon Damaris waited in the small inn parlour. Mr. Rushton came at intervals and spoke to her, and tea was sent to her at half-past four: she guessed who had thought of that. The other witnesses sat round the fire, and looked askance at Damaris seated by the window. First one and then another of the witnesses would be called from the room, and Mrs. Treleven talked in a loud voice of "Fine ladies getting what they deserved," and "What a fine young man Jim Trevarthick was!" with ghastly details of his corpse, until Damaris grew sick and faint. The parlour window looked on the back into a small garden but some of the bolder spirits of the crowd had penetrated to it, and with noses flattened against the window panes, watched Damaris and the other witnesses. Sarah, too weak to stand by her mistress against Mrs. Treleven, had gone over to the enemy, and sat by the fire, between Mrs. Treleven and one of the fishermen.

The winter afternoon grew dark, the windows became covered with moisture within and with ice outside. Damaris could no longer see the faces of the people in the garden.

A candle was brought in and placed upon the table, and the room looked more garish, more un-homelike, than before.

A bitter draught whistled through the badly-fitting window-case, and chilled Damaris to the bone. But she would not draw nearer the fire where the others crouched, preventing her from more than seeing a gleam as the blaze shot up.

There was no other unoccupied room in the small inn, and Damaris was obliged to sit with the other witnesses.

It was half-past five, and she was sent for again. More useless troublesome questions were asked her; after answering them, she was sent back once more

to the waiting-room. Ten minutes, twenty minutes passed, and Mr. Rushton came into the room.

His face told her what had happened.

"Well?" she said faintly.

"As we expected. Come along, my dear."

"You will have to go to Hallsburn to-night. The carriage that brought Vanburgh has been sent for: it will be here in a moment. Keep the mob out," to the policeman; "don't let them get in. Ah! here you are, Vanburgh. Have you managed it?"

"'FATHER, YOU DO NOT BELIEVE I COULD DO SUCH A THING?'" (*p.* 486).

He drew her arm through his, and led her out.

A policeman standing in the passage came up and put his hand on her shoulder.

"I arrest you for——" he began, but Mr. Rushton cut him short—

"All right, my good fellow. Here!"

He led him on one side, and some whispering passed between them. The man shook his head; Mr. Rushton came back to her side.

"No; they won't hear of bail."

"He has offered fabulous sums," said Mr. Norton briskly, "though I told him it could not be done. It is only a night's discomfort, Miss Lemarcham. To-morrow you will be free; there was little evidence against you."

"Are you cold?" asked Vanburgh of Damaris.

He was standing before her, shielding her as well as he could from the inquisitive hostile looks of the

people passing down the passage. He bore the disarranged, untidy look of his day and night's travelling.

"Yes."

A rattle of horses' hoofs outside and a hoarse shout from the crowd announced the carriage.

The policeman was sent before them, and Damaris, between Mr. Rushton and Gerald Vanburgh, followed.

Mr. Norton, wondering when he was going to have something to eat—he had been travelling since four o'clock that morning—brought up the rear.

A howl of rage greeted Damaris when she stepped from the inn door. The sleet had turned into heavy snow, but the fishermen still waited to give a last groan.

Damaris stopped short and shrank closer to Vanburgh when that sound met her. He drew her hand more tightly through his arm, and half-carried her to the carriage. Harry Nixon stood by the step.

"Take Norton up to the Court, give him a good dinner, and bring him into Hallsburn before ten o'clock to-morrow," said Vanburgh; and Nixon nodded.

The policeman climbed to a seat beside the driver; Mr. Rushton took the seat by Damaris in the close carriage; Gerald Vanburgh placed himself opposite.

Harry Nixon slammed the door and they had started. The crowd, with hisses, yells, and language that Gerald trusted Damaris did not hear, followed the carriage up the steep street. It passed her father's house; Damaris saw her stepmother standing at the open door, the lighted lamp behind her in the passage. Was she never to see the little green verandah and the whitewashed house again? Would she never again go up the steep street between the cottages or watch the sunset from the pier?

At the turning to Mr. Rushton's house the carriage was stopped.

"Here is Miss Lemarcham's bag, sir. Sarah packed it and gave it to me."

"All right, Williams. Thank you."

The carriage drove on again. With quick deft fingers Vanburgh arranged the furs and rugs that were in the carriage round Damaris. Some had been left by him and Mr. Norton, some a messenger on a fleet horse had brought from the Court.

"You are still cold?" he asked, as he felt her shiver when he was wrapping a rug round her feet.

"A little; not much."

He pulled off the long fur-lined coat he was wearing.

"Now, put this on."

"But—you—you will be cold."

"I can look after myself. I can wrap a rug round me if I feel cold."

His tone admitted of no denial, and she obediently allowed him to wrap her in the coat and cover her with rugs.

Mr. Rushton, tired with his busy day, dozed in his corner; Damaris lay back; the carriage lamps flashing on her face showed it pale and weary. Vanburgh leant forward, his elbows on his knees, his face between his hands. He glanced now and then at Damaris, but her eyes were closed, and he would not disturb her, though she was not sleeping.

The snow was an inch deep on the road by now, and the carriage rolled smoothly, silently along. It stopped with a sudden jerk, and Damaris opened her eyes and sat upright.

"Are we there?" she said, looking at him piteously.

He put his hand over hers, laid bare by the slipping of the rug at the sudden stoppage.

"No, no; it is only half-way. We are stopping to give the horses something."

He did not take his hand away for the rest of the journey, and Damaris let hers lie in his without an effort to draw it from him. Helen was forgotten.

The cold grew more intense; Mr. Rushton shivered and awoke, but neither of the other two moved. They were both beyond caring for appearances.

Mr. Rushton consulted his watch by the lamp; he had to rub the frosted glass of the door before the light could penetrate into the carriage.

"Eight o'clock! we are taking a long time."

"The roads are heavy."

Silence fell on them again: a silence which lasted until the lights of the outskirts of Hallsburn flashed upon their faces as they drove past.

Through the quiet streets, deserted this snowy night, the carriage rolled. Before a dark building, with a lamp over the entrance, it stopped. A row of advertisements of persons wanted by the Government and by the Queen hung underneath the lamp.

"We are there," said Vanburgh.

A man came out of the door, and entered into a conversation with the policeman.

The carriage door was opened and Damaris helped out.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

"We two stood there with never a third,
But each by each, as each knew well:
The sights we saw and the sounds we heard,
The lights and the shades made up a spell
Till the trouble grew and stirred."

THE accommodation for prisoners was better at Hallsburn police-office than is usually the case in country towns, but to both Mr. Rushton and Gerald Vanburgh it seemed horrible to have to leave Damaris in such a place. A fire was hurriedly lighted, but the room was too cold and damp to be warmed for some time.

Money thrown on all sides procured food and tea for Damaris, but she clung to Mr. Rushton, unnerved by the strain she had undergone, and begged him not to leave her.

"My dear girl, be brave. It is only for to-night," he kept repeating; but she held his hand and begged him not to leave her.

They tore themselves away at last, after repeated orders from the police. A kind-looking, motherly woman, the wife of one of the policemen, had been engaged to wait upon Damaris, and they left her in her care.

Mr. Rushton, too old to bear these trying scenes, was worn out; he declared he felt an attack of gout coming on, and the cooking at the hotel was execrable.

Vanburgh wondered how he could think of cooking with the memory of Damaris shut up in a narrow whitewashed cell a few streets away.

"Do not tramp up and down the room like that," said Mr. Rushton irritably, as the younger man, with bent head and gloomy face, paced the room where they were—or rather, Mr. Rushton was—having supper.

Vanburgh threw himself into an arm-chair; he sat there far into the small hours.

As Mr. Rushton had prophesied, he was laid up the next morning with a bad attack of gout.

"Send for my man to come and nurse me, and go and see Damaris the first thing," were his directions.

The injunction to see Damaris was hardly needed. Vanburgh found her bending over the fire in the room that his and Mr. Rushton's money had procured her the use of from the policemen.

She hardly looked up on his entrance, and he was struck with the dead whiteness of her face and the unnatural quietness of her movements.

He leant over her, took her hand, and held it. She looked up in his face without a blush or a tremor.

"Is it a painful death?" she asked.

"Damaris!" he caught her in his arms. "Damaris, you must not think of such things!"

"I know they will hang me," she said quietly, resting her cheek against his shoulder. "Innocent people are convicted sometimes."

"There is no evidence against you; you will be free this evening. You are to be examined at four this afternoon, and the magistrate will laugh at the evidence; it was only those prejudiced fools who could think there was anything against you."

"People have always disliked me," she said thoughtfully.

"Do I dislike you?"

"No," she said. "Poor Gerald! I am afraid you do not."

He saw that the long hours of loneliness, the feeling that she was in prison, the shock and strain of the last three days were pressing on her brain. He kissed her and petted her, soothing her as though she had been a child.

The colour came back into her cheeks after a time, and she drew herself away from his arms.

"I am half dazed," she said, putting her hands to her forehead. "I am talking foolishly."

The tears rose to her eyes and she began to sob. He let her cry, knowing it was the best thing: that tears would be an outlet for her overcharged feelings.

But it was for a short time only she gave way. She suppressed her sobs and tried to become her calm ordinary self, but the effort was useless; if her tears were dried she could not still the tremor of her lips, or hide the fact that she was shaking from head to foot.

"Now, Damaris," he said cheerfully, "we are going to have a long talk and settle everything."

He tried to take her in his arms again, but she pushed him away, and he allowed her to take a chair at some distance from him.

"You foolish woman! you had better give in at once, and not think you are going to be miserable," he said, with a tender triumphant smile.

"Well, to begin with: when you come out of here you will marry me as soon as possible?"

"And Helen?"

"My dearest soul! Helen, Miss Desborough, has become a dream since the day before yesterday. You and I, Damaris, belong to one another. Miss Desborough does not care for me, and if she did I would not marry her. I have behaved like a fool, but I am going no further. I can only remember one woman: there is only one woman in the world for me, and I mean to marry her."

"What am I to do?" muttered Damaris, tearing with nervous fingers the handkerchief she held.

"You are to marry me. Come, we will be quite honest with one another. We are not boy and girl, to think that we should die or be miserable all our lives if we did not marry one another, but we are man and woman, and I know that I want you. If you do not come to me I shall feel all my life long that I have missed the best thing the world has to give me. I have a diabolical temper, but I am learning to control it, and I would do my best to make you happy. You need not think that if you will not take me I shall return to Helen Desborough. I shall never marry if you will have nothing to do with me."

"I am suspected of this: it will always be remembered against me, and you would not like your wife to——"

He crossed the space between them and knelt by her side, looking into her eyes.

"Do you think we should mind what the world said?"

"I do not know; you might. No, you would not. I believe we could do without the world if you thought me innocent. Do you?"

"It never crossed my soul that you were anything else. I should not be here if such a suspicion had come to me."

"What ought I to do?" she said again, looking away from his eyes.

"Marry me," he said masterfully.

He stood up, and putting his hand under her chin, raised her face to his and kissed her on the lips. That settled any doubts that Damaris might still have had. The prison and the coming examination were forgotten for a time.

"I wish I were beautiful, like Helen," she whispered.

He laughed; he was quite satisfied with her as she was.

"You will marry me immediately?" he asked.

"If you like."

"If I like! I shall take you away to Italy, and when we come back we will live at my place in Herefordshire. You shall never see Trentham again."

Damaris sighed wistfully.

"I wished my father cared for me," she said. "I hate coming to you in such a lonely, friendless way."

His arms tightened round her, and he bent his head and kissed the hand that was resting on his shoulder.

"You shall never regret it," he said.

"I wonder poor old Sam did not come to see me,"

she said presently. "I did not think he would have deserted me."

"I did not see him," Vanburgh said absently. He was wondering how soon the marriage ceremony could be performed.

A knock at the door sent them apart with scarlet faces.

"A telegram for you, sir; boy's waiting for an answer."

It was from Nixon.

"Sam lying ill; knows something about Trevarthick's death. Come at once."

Vanburgh rapidly pencilled an answer, and gave it to the policeman waiting at the door.

"I must go, Damaris. Something has been discovered about Trevarthick's death, and old Sam is the person. He is ill."

"Very ill?"

"The telegram only said ill. Did you see him the day of Trevarthick's death?"

"No; I had not seen him much for some time. I am afraid I neglected him; I was thinking of someone else. Poor old Sam! Give him my love if you see him, and tell him I am sorry he is ill."

"I must be off now, Damaris. You will not worry yourself ill again, will you? Mr. Rushton will come to see you if he possibly can, and keep up your spirits. I shall be back by four o'clock."

"You will, Gerald? promise me you will."

"My darling, I swear I will!"

"My nerves are gone," she said, with a pitiful laugh. "I have no courage left."

"You sweet woman! That is right: smile at me. I shall be here at four, never fear, and perhaps bring evidence with me that will show how Trevarthick died. Now I must go. Remember, you are to eat a good lunch and not to get absurd, silly ideas into your head. I am really off this time."

He rode to Trentham, to get there the faster. It was nearly eleven before he left Hallsburn, and though he did not spare his horse, it was after twelve when he reached Trentham.

A boy with a note from Nixon was waiting for him at the top of the village street.

"Come on at once to Mrs. Cook's cottage at Lynscombe. Norton, and Mr. Connelly the magistrate, and I are gone on."

A dog-cart was ready to take him to Lynscombe; he blessed Nixon for his thoughtfulness. Another half-hour of sharp driving, and he was at Mother Cook's cottage.

He pushed open the door and entered.

Old Sam lay on a heap of straw in the corner of the room. He was covered with straw and rags to keep him warm; his white face, the eyes open, met Vanburgh's gaze.

Old Mother Cook crouched over her fire muttering, opposite her stood Nixon, and by Sam's heap of straw were Mr. Norton and Mr. Connelly.

"Here is Mr. Vanburgh. He has come from Miss Lemarcham," said Mr. Norton to the old man.

His eye brightened, he put out a feeble hand, and caught Vanburgh's coat sleeve.

"To think of her in prison! My little missie! Her never did such a thing; 'twar an accident. I see'd it all, and so did her fine lady cousin."

"What! Miss Desborough saw it?"

"Ay, sir, her did; her'll tell 'ee 'twas an accident; her was standin' wi' him on Cliff, and his fut slipped, and he fell agin they rotten palin's and went over. I see'd it all, and I've a telled 'ee"—pointing to Mr. Norton—"all I see'd."

"But why did you not let us know this before?"

A cunning look came over Sam's face.

"I never thought as Miss Damaris 'ould be put in prison for 't; her'd gone before ever the fine lady cousin came along, and——"

"He'd got his money hid up to Cliff among the stones," interrupted Mother Cook.

"Be quiet, you old witch!" shrieked Sam, trying to raise himself from his bed of straw.

"I found 'un theer in a sort o' a fit, and when he came to hisself nothin' would do but I must hold my tongue. He got wusser and wusser, and yesterday I went off to Trentham for a doctor, and when I brought news to 'un about doctor's darter bein' up for murder, nought 'ould pacify 'un but I must up and fetch a lawyer. He'th a worried the whole blessed night because I 'ouldn't go in the snow."

"Iss sure, her 'ouldn't go, and I knew my missie never even see'd 'un fall from Cliff."

"I warn't a-goin' in a snowstorm, ye old scarecrow!" the woman said angrily.

"I'd a-gone myself, but her locked the door," Sam whimpered. "To think of my missie bein' put to jail."

"We have the old man's statement down in black and white," said Mr. Norton. "We brought a magistrate with us; for this old woman gave us a hint what it was all about, and as our good friend here is quite unable to go to Hallsburn himself, it was lucky we did."

"I met Mrs. Cook in Trentham and heard her inquiring for a lawyer; she said something about Trevarthick's death, and luckily Mr. Norton was with me. He gathered from her what it might be, and insisted upon bringing a magistrate with us. We were happy in finding Mr. Connelly at home, and we brought him here with us," explained Nixon. "I sent you the telegram before we drove to fetch Mr. Connelly."

"Where did you find Sam, Mrs. Cook?" asked Vanburgh.

"Up to Cliff. I was a-comin' back from Trevarthick's farm up to Horley, over the moor, and among they great stones I found 'un lying in a sort o' fit."

"How did you get him down here?"

"I dragged 'un. I'm main strong, though 'ee 'ouldn't think it. He'th been gettin' wusser ever since. I see'd death in his face weeks agone."

It did not need a prophet to see death in his face now. Old Sam was fast leaving this world; he had sunk into a sort of stupor during Nixon's explanation, but he roused himself again when Vanburgh bent over him.

"I'd a-come myself if her 'adn't locked the door. Tell missie I'd a-come myself if the snow'd a-been a

fut deep. To think o' my Miss Damaris in a common jail!"

"She told me to give you her love if I saw you."

"Ay; she'd not forget old Sam, whatever her own trouble might be. You'll look after her, won't 'ee, sir? The doctor's a poor sort and her ain't happy; poor old Sam see'd it in her face many a time.

"I will look after her."

"An', sir, don't 'ee belave I'd a-hid my money up to Cliff; her'th a dramed ut. I was only takin' a walk along the cliffs, and when I see'd Mr. Trevarthick and missie I didn't like to show myself, and I waited behind a rock, and when her'd gone her fine lady cousin came along, and I waited a bit longer and see'd him fall over Cliff, and I don't remember aught more till I found myself in Mother Cook's cottage. But 'ee don't think I'd be such a fule as to hide my money up to Cliff, do 'ee, sir?"

"No, no," said Vanburgh to pacify him; "of course we do not think your money is there."

"The other gemmen, they don't belave it, do they?"

The three men declared that they never would give a second thought to his having hidden his money among the large stones on the moor.

Sam, re-assured, dozed off again. He was too weak to be troubled long about anything.

"We must hurry," said Mr. Norton, looking at his watch; "there is this lady to be seen who witnessed the young man's death. It is strange she did not come forward at the inquest."

"Very strange," said Vanburgh grimly. "By the by, I suppose Mrs. Cook must appear as a witness?"

"Yes, she must."

Strenuous objections were raised by the old woman to being driven to Hallsburn, but gold and threats of the law overcame them. They left the cottage with the understanding that a carriage should be sent from Trentham, bringing a woman to nurse old Sam and the necessaries he needed, and that Mrs. Cook should take the same carriage and be driven to Hallsburn.

As they drove back to Trentham, Nixon explained to Vanburgh what Sam had told them.

He had gone to Cliff to hide his money; he said he was merely taking a walk, but his small store was afterwards found in a hole in one of the largest stones; here, hidden from sight by the large rocks which rose in queer shapes through the turf, he saw the meeting between Trevarthick and Damaris, and later between Helen and Trevarthick. He would not show himself, from fear of his secret hiding-place being discovered; Damaris, he knew, would confiscate the money if she found it. Whether he heard anything that passed between Trevarthick and Helen or Damaris he did not say; probably not, as Sam was growing deaf, and the rocks where he was hidden were some distance away from the edge of Cliff, where the interviews took place. The shock of Trevarthick's fall coming on a brain weakened by drink and on a body feeble and worn out, had brought on this fit.

Mother Cook had found him and taken him to her cottage; how the old woman managed to drag the man so far was wonderful, though the steep slope of the hillside was slippery with frost that night.

"She was obliged to do it or leave him out all night. It takes her some time to get to Trentham, and she was tired out with her walk to and from poor Trevarthick's farm."

"Well, Damaris is safe and free from all suspicion: that is the only thing I care for. But I mean to say what I think to Miss Desborough. What a fiend the woman must be to allow her cousin to be suspected of a murder when she knew it to be an accident!"

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

"God be thanked; the meanest of His creatures
Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with,
One to show a woman when he loves her!"

HELEN in her uncle's house had passed far from a comfortable day and night since Damaris had been conveyed to Hallsburn. From her bedroom window she had watched the carriage, followed by the yelling mob, climb up the steep street in the snowstorm, and she had felt a movement of compunction for her cousin. The compunction turned to an angry fear when, on Sarah's return to the house, she learnt that Gerald Vanburgh and Mr. Rushton had accompanied Damaris to Hallsburn.

The irony of fate had overtaken Helen; the very silence she thought would part Damaris and Vanburgh for ever had roused his passion and made him forget the shackles that bound him to Helen: it had taken him to Damaris' feet.

Helen had judged his character wrongly; she had not calculated, she had not known, that his love for Damaris absorbed any petty considerations of what the world might say or think of the woman he chose for his wife.

Helen was restless and miserable. Her uncle sat over the fire, maundering upon the disgrace to his name; Mrs. Lemarcham and she the night before had quarrelled, and her breakfast had not been brought to her bedroom or the fire lighted; Sarah was too busy gossiping, and Mrs. Lemarcham refused point-blank to trouble herself.

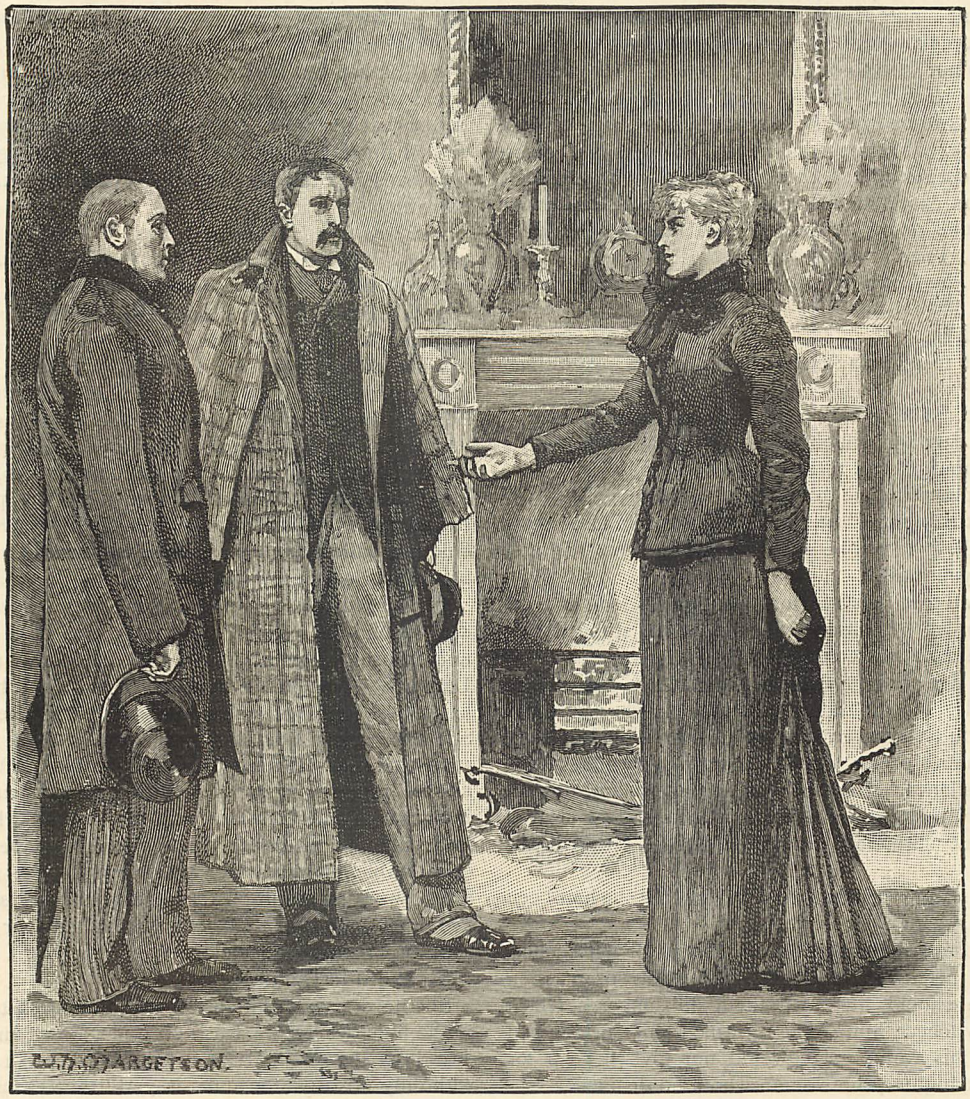
A more threatening letter than usual had arrived from one of her creditors by the morning post, and Helen was thoroughly wretched and uncomfortable.

She wondered what was to happen now, when a message was brought her by Mrs. Lemarcham that Mr. Vanburgh and another gentleman were waiting in the drawing-room to see her.

She wore black in remembrance of poor Jim, who was to be buried to-day, and her fair beauty was all the more striking for the dark setting.

Mr. Norton stared when the lovely creature entered the tawdry little drawing-room; he had expected a showily-dressed, country town girl, not this woman of the world, with her charming smile and easy manner. To Vanburgh she seemed the incarnation of all that was evil; he was not, perhaps, qualified to be her judge at such a moment.

He looked sternly at her, and refused to see the hand she held out to him.



"HE LOOKED STERNLY AT HER, AND REFUSED TO SEE THE HAND SHE HELD OUT TO HIM" (*p.* 492).

Like a flash of lightning it crossed Helen's mind that he knew she had seen the accident on Cliff. Rapidly her mind reviewed the situation : it would be awkward if he did know. His first words made her certain.

"We have come to take you to Hallsburn, to appear as witness for your cousin."

"I ? What can I do for her ?"

She asked the question merely to gain time ; she was positive her presence at Trevarthick's death was known.

"You were present when he fell from the cliff—you were seen with Trevarthick by Sam Burrowes."

"Yes, I was with him certainly on Cliff, but——"

"It is useless your denying you saw him fall. Sam, behind the rocks on the moor, saw the whole thing. We have his deposition here ; he is too ill to appear as a witness. The carriage will be here at a quarter to two. Will you be ready by then ?"

He spoke with stern matter-of-factness, and Helen understood her chance of ever becoming Mrs. Vanburgh was gone. She rallied her forces and looked him in the eyes.

"You have not asked me why I did not appear at the inquest ?"

"I do not intend doing so."

"My dear young lady," said Mr. Norton, bustling forward, "it was most culpable and wrong of you not to appear at the inquest. You will be asked some awkward, some very awkward, questions by the magistrate, I expect."

"I mean to tell you, Mr. Vanburgh, why I kept silence," she said, looking at him.

Despair made Helen reckless; she faced them with defiant eyes and tightly-drawn lips.

"I do not wish to hear."

"But you shall. I——"

"She is to be my wife, Miss Desborough."

"Is she? I supposed as much. That is one reason why I kept silence. I thought I should part you, for I knew you cared for one another, and I never dreamt you would marry a woman who was suspected of murder. I see I was wrong."

"Did you mean to allow her to be suspected all her life long?"

"I did."

Words rose to Vanburgh's lips, but he choked them back.

"I did. I hate her! and I wanted to hurt her."

"The carriage will be here at two o'clock. Be ready," said Vanburgh, and turned to go.

"Suppose I refuse to appear as a witness?"

"That is useless," he said, with a short contemptuous laugh. "It will be wiser for you to come forward. In fact, you must."

The two men left her, and Vanburgh's look of utter contempt as he passed from the room stung Helen far more than any words could have done.

When the carriage came for her at two o'clock, she was ready. She told Mrs. Lemarcham where she was going, and on what errand; and, let it be said in Polly Lemarcham's praise, that she was properly shocked at Helen's silence. Her husband, strange to say, did not seem very relieved that his daughter was to be cleared from any suspicion connected with Trevarthick's death.

"The shame was the same," he said: "she had been in prison."

He did not appear to blame Helen for her silence, and he negatived decidedly his wife's proposition that she should live with them no longer. Helen had bewitched him; she gratified his pride and flattered his vanity. He would not give her up for his own daughter, the woman whom he disliked.

The court was packed with people. This was the most exciting event that had happened in Hallsburn for years, and the rumours that had arisen concerning the case heightened the interest. Trentham was well represented: in fact, the population of the fishing village was distributed equally that afternoon between Hallsburn and Horley Cross, where Trevarthick was to be buried.

Damaris sat pale and quiet, facing the magistrates. She looked up when Gerald Vanburgh and Mr. Norton entered; his face told her she was safe, that more evidence had been discovered.

The case proceeded, the witnesses gave their evidence, and with the appearance of Helen a thrill ran through the crowded hall.

She was perfectly composed, and the movement of admiration she felt around her sent two bright spots of colour to her face. The Trentham people felt proud that such a woman lived among them.

She gave her evidence in a plain, direct way, and the magistrate's question why she had not come forward at the inquest was met with a charming smile and the answer:

"I did not think anyone would imagine my cousin could do such a thing. There would never be any doubt that poor Mr. Trevarthick's death was an accident, I thought; and until I was told that my cousin was arrested I did not think my evidence could be of any value."

She was scarcely believed, but the question was not pressed. Damaris' grave honest eyes met her cousin's, and Helen had the grace to blush.

Sam's deposition was read, and Mother Cook gave evidence of where she found him.

Damaris was free, and Trevarthick's death was an accident. It was a tame ending, the people thought, but one or two of the more justice-loving fishermen and Hallsburn people gave Damaris a cheer as she left the Town Hall on Gerald Vanburgh's arm, and an effort was made to hiss Helen when she stepped into the carriage that was to take her back to Trentham. The hiss failed, few men had the sternness to be hard on such a beautiful woman.

She went back to Trentham, and settled down to the dull hateful life. A few days later she read the announcement of the marriage of Gerald Vanburgh and Damaris. A packet of bank-notes was sent her from an unknown donor: a sum sufficient to pay her debts. She never learnt from whom the money came, but she suspected that Damaris was the sender. After this, her life went on, diversified with quarrels with Mrs. Lemarcham and flirtations with the few men who came to Trentham. At last, in desperation to escape the uncomfortable house and her aunt's tongue, she married a hard-working curate, with nothing but his salary to live upon. It was sufficient punishment for selfish, luxurious, ease-loving Helen.

To return to Damaris.

She never saw Trentham again. Vanburgh took her to the hotel where Mr. Rushton was staying, and a few days later she was married in Hallsburn parish church, with only Mr. Rushton and Cissy Matthews as wedding guests.

Poor old Sam was dead—dying suddenly after the telegram was read to him that his "little missie" was free.

To her father Damaris wrote to tell him she was going to marry Gerald Vanburgh, and to ask him to be present at her marriage. His answer was that he hoped never to hear of her again, and never more to set eyes upon her face.

"You never shall see him again," said Vanburgh, when he read the letter. "You shall never put your foot in Trentham."

Mr. Rushton also shook the dust of Trentham off his feet.

"I am getting old," he said. "Henceforth I shall stay in London."

Of Damaris and her husband it may be said they are absorbed in one another.

THE END.

THE YEAR'S JEWELS.

BY M. C. GILLINGTON.

RUBY: JULY.

Discovers poison and cures all evil springing from unkindness.

RED rose in my garden glowing,
Red rose round my lattice blowing,
Your odours creep
Through the gates of sleep,
In warm breaths coming and going.

Red rose in your regal showing,
Of human sorrow unknowing,
Your sweets shall steep,
As in poison deep,
The heart with anguish o'erflowing!

Red rose in your gracious growing,
That magical scent bestowing—
From your ruby cup
I drink it up,
With its drops my memory strowing.

And soft as the flakes of snowing,
Till the time of the first cock-crowing,
Its poison-sleep
On my heart lies deep,
And stays my tears from their flowing.

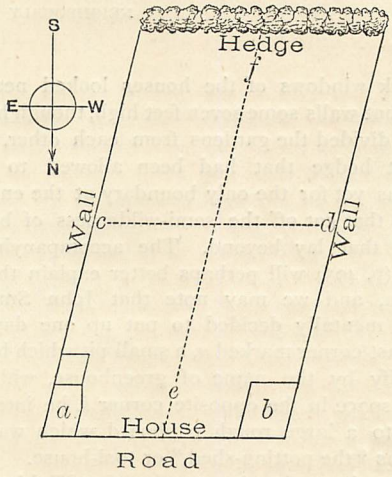
HOW A WILDERNESS BECAME A GARDEN.

BY A PRACTICAL GARDENER.

VERY probably the modest possessors of little gardens of dimensions that vary between a few square yards and, say, the third of an acre take as much and even more pleasure in their cultivation and management than does the wealthy proprietor of a vast domain whose vineries, pineries, and ferneries, he but seldom visits and knows but little about.

Now, fortunately for many of us, it takes a very long time before the perpetual addition of street to street makes anything like real garden growth an absolute impossibility; and with all the growth of our giant cities it is some considerable satisfaction for us to know that there are such things as suburban gardens—gardens, too, that afford their owners unmixed satisfaction and amusement after the din and toil of the day are over. It will doubtless be acceptable to many, then, that it is of this very class of gardens that we are now proposing to treat, for a good deal can be said about them.

Nor will it be difficult to picture to ourselves an imaginary and newly-springing-up suburb, which we will designate Hampgate-on-the-Hill. A few traces of country association still lingered about this undulating and picturesque spot: here and there a fine tree, or some damaged shrub or hardy evergreen still remained, and, indeed, within the fairly substantial space allotted as the future garden of one of the goodly villa-houses known as Highland Villas, still stood one such tree which the contractor had not as yet thought of taking down. But there was no mistake about it. The present prospect was certainly forlorn. Here was midsummer, and, saving for the presence of an occasional tree or patch of brick-dusted grass, on which some buttercups were striving to flourish, there was nought else assuredly but the sun to show that July was about to break upon the garden spaces of Highland Villas. A very wilderness were they, isolated bricks and slates, remnants of mortar-heaps and drainage-pipes being the staple decoration. Two of these houses, Nos. 12 and 13, had recently, however, had their front windows placarded with the single word "Sold," and, indeed, but a day or two previously a couple of vans outside the house which had the tree at the back had discharged their load, and John Smith and his wife had moved into No. 12. Within a week, and there were vans outside No. 13, of which the servants at No. 12 ascertained the same hour that Mr. Charles

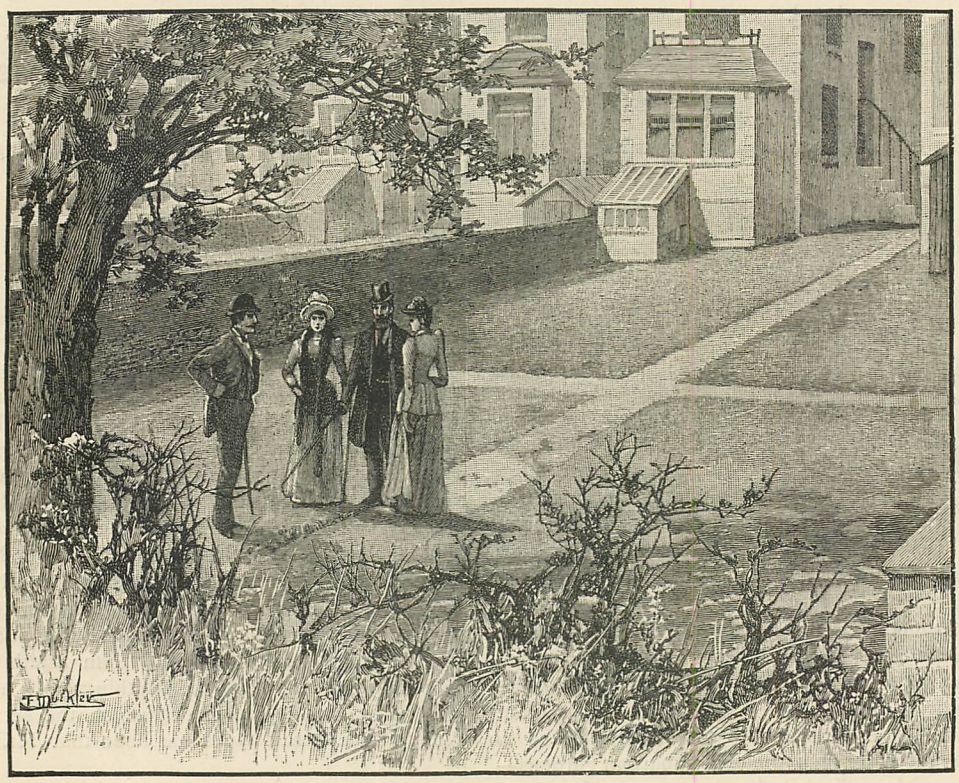


OUTLINE PLAN OF THE GARDEN.

Robinson and his niece Mary had become the occupants.

As, however, we are to treat of suburban gardens, we will suppose that our friends have now already unpacked, and join them in their first stroll over their new "wilderness," for as yet we cannot call it a garden. The appearance of John Smith and his wife along their sloping garden space had at once put the strange cats to flight. This was a good beginning, at all events, for cats are bad gardeners. Let us say at once that the back windows of the houses looked nearly due south, that walls some seven feet high, though hurriedly run up, divided the gardens from each other, while a quickset hedge that had been allowed to remain served as yet for the only boundary at the end of the gardens that cut off the semi-wilderness of brickfield country that lay beyond. The accompanying little outline (p. 495) will perhaps better explain the whole situation, and we may note that John Smith had already mentally decided to put up one day in the north-east corner marked *a*, a small pit which he meant to dignify by the name of greenhouse, while quite a small space in the opposite corner *b*, he intended to devote to a large rough cupboard which was to be known as "the potting-shed," or tool-house.

Now we have already remarked that Highland Villas stood on a gentle declivity. Still the ascent from the hedge at the end of the garden towards the house was nothing very wonderful, so that one of the first things that John Smith called his wife's attention to was the fragments of drainage pipes that lay here and there about. This at once brings us to notice the first real and absolutely essential matter entailed upon anyone's attention on *taking possession of a garden*, and that is its drainage. Indeed, this may be called the very foundation of all success in horticulture, as every effort to rear fruit, flowers, and vegetables in the absence of any proper system of drainage can only end in failure. In the case of Highland Villas the outlet for surplus and surface water lay, of course, towards the hedge. John Smith was therefore very glad to find six drain traps in the garden—namely, two near the house by the corners marked *a* and *b*, two others rather more than half-way down the garden (*c* and *d*), and two others in a line down the centre marked in our small diagram as *e* and *f*. A sort of rough cross pathway, though a very narrow one, he already found half traced out, probably by the workmen, which in his impatient zeal he almost decided to retain or perhaps to develop; but of this we shall be able to speak further on. And next as to the depth of the drains: they should run about three feet deep, and the lines of pipes should run some twenty feet apart, and in the case of a very stiff clay soil, the lines might be even nearer together than



NEIGHBOURLY ADVICE IN LAYING OUT A GARDEN.

that. And here it might be noted that Mr. Smith told his wife with much delight that he had taken care to be present when the garden drainage was laid down—not merely for the sake of getting any general hints as to the process, but also to insist upon it that the upper surface soil should be put back just as it was taken up, so as not to have afterwards on the surface of the garden any stones or rougher material that originally lay underneath.

And a pleasant discussion took place a few days afterwards between John Smith and his wife as to what was to be the fate of the tree about which the contractor, as we have already remarked, had not troubled himself. John thought that as it was not a fruit-tree of any sort it had better come down, knowing, of course, that not even grass would grow under its shadows and being somewhat jealous, therefore, of the space that it could not fail wholly to monopolise: he was fearful too that the ramification of the roots would very much tend to exhaust the nourishing properties of the soil and in this respect he was certainly right. But it was a grumble to which he gave vent at the trouble which the annual fall of the leaf would occasion him that lost him the day and was the saving of the tree.

"You goose, dear," said Alice, his better half, "don't you see that it is an evergreen, and evergreens are plants that do not shed *all* their leaves at any *one* time during the year." So it ended in a laugh, and at the husband himself being playfully dubbed an "evergreen;" but the good little wife had another argument in her favour—"Don't you see, dear," added she, "that the tree is almost at the end of the garden and quite close to the hedge:" this was a fact that poor John could not gainsay. "Very well then, dear, a good half of the roots will therefore run under the hedge into the dreary No-Man's-Land that lies beyond us, and, besides, we shall be grateful for its shelter, and it will save us the trouble of building a summer-house, so that we can sometimes on hot afternoons and evenings have tea under its branches."

John Smith's parting shaft was, however, an allusion to the long shadow which its branches would unavoidably cast over the garden and the consequent detriment to the ripening of any fruit or the perfection of many flowers. Here again he was right, but the little amicable discussion between husband and wife has afforded us an opportunity of stating the arguments that are in favour of or that militate against the preservation of a large tree. Undoubtedly a fine tree is an ornament, and "a thing of beauty is a joy for ever." A tree, too, is always dear to the children of a household, though undeniably detrimental to all growth in its immediate neighbourhood.

In this instance the tree remained, but the next important operation was a deep trenching of the whole garden from end to end, when some good and rich manure was also at the same time dug in. Now the first trenching of a new garden is a very important one, as all refuse or stones and indeed everything that impedes garden growth ought to be then removed. This done, in a few days' time the "wilderness" began to wear the semblance of a garden.

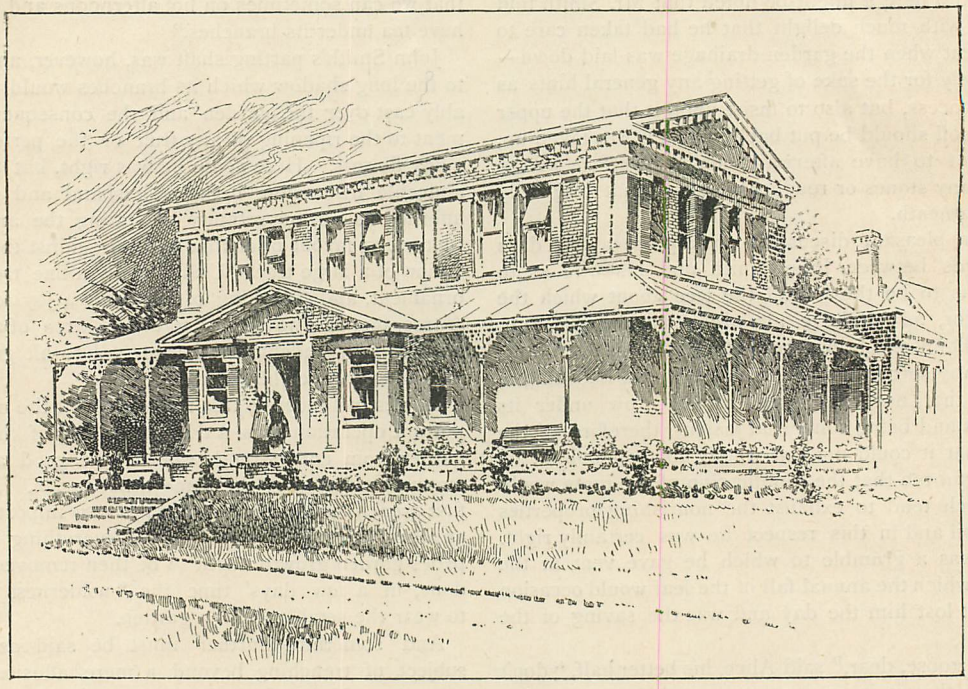
And something further must be said as to the subject of trenching beyond a mere allusion to its necessity. Now it has often been objected that if the *sub-soil* of a garden is poor material, it ought not to be brought to the top. But in reply to this difficulty we must remember that every time some of the poor sub-soil is brought to the surface, the very exposure of it to the action of the atmosphere tends much to improve it. No half measures should be employed when digging and trenching; the spade should be well home, and now in the present instance when manure is supposed to be dug in, the soil will of course, at once materially improve. The garden at No. 13, an end one of irregular shape, soon also began to attract the observation of No. 12, but of this we must speak later on.

A LOVER OF NATURE.

MISS MARIANNE NORTH.
(*From a photograph by Messrs. Elliot & Fry, Baker Street, W.*)

NO visitor to Kew Gardens should need to be told who, or what, Miss Marianne North was. Hers was the gift, not only of the remarkable collection of drawings of foreign plants and flowers, but of the building in Kew Gardens in which they are housed. We have before us the two volumes in which, under the title of "Recollections of a Happy Life," Messrs. Macmillan have just published Miss North's autobiography; which was edited, after its author's death in 1890, by her sister, Mrs. John Addington Symonds. It is one of the pleasantest and most interesting books of travel we have opened for many days.

From her earliest days Miss North was passionately fond of painting flowers and plants. "She painted," says her sister, "as a clever child would, everything she thought beautiful in nature, and had scarcely ever any artistic teaching." And in search of subjects she travelled in every part of the globe. In North and South America, in the West Indies, in South Africa, India, Ceylon, Borneo, Japan and Australasia, she sought and found plants, rare and beautiful; and painted them amid their natural



MISS NORTH'S PICTURE GALLERY AT KEW.
(From a photograph by Mr. H. N. King, Avenue Road, W.)

surroundings. And then, with noble generosity, she gave to the nation the result of her many years' toil. There was obvious exaggeration in what a distinguished Chilian said of her, that she "went about into sunny countries, painting blue sky and light, and brought it home to the poor people of London, *who never saw it, and did not know what it was like!*" Much as our climate is reviled, we are not quite so hardly used as that!

A little boy in Australia asked Miss North, of whose exploits he had been told, "What will they do with you when you return to England; will the Queen knight you?" Reward of that nature was impossible; but the Queen herself wrote to the lady and acknowledged her gift to the nation. Miss North had a happy knack of making friends wherever she went, and she tells some amusing stories in her book of unexpected help from strange quarters. On one expedition in California she had missed the only passenger train and was sent on to her destination on the engine of a wood train. "We stopped very often," she says, "and it was late before I got back to Mrs. R—'s. When I tried to slip a couple of dollars into the engineer's hand, he coolly opened my bag and put them inside. 'Just you keep them things till you want 'em, and shake hands again to show you don't mind my saying so,' he said. 'The talk he had had with me had done him real good, and he didn't want pay.'"

Miss North had letters of introduction and friends awaiting her wherever she went; but when she could so easily *make* friends, it is no wonder her life was a "happy" one. She was fond of the humorous side of things, and often told a story against herself. Of animals she was almost as keen an observer as of plants, and writing of the Zoo at Melbourne, she says: "I heard a good story of a cockatoo in those gardens, which lived near the porter's lodge; hearing him say constantly, 'Walk in, ladies and gentlemen. Don't come all at once; one at a time.' The bird escaped from its cage, and was discovered with a troop of wild cockatoos attacking it, lying on its back, defending itself with its feet and beak, and crying, 'Come on, ladies and gentlemen, come on; not all at once—one at a time, one at a time.'"

Our readers must turn to the book for themselves to see the difficulties which Miss North had to surmount in the accomplishment of her self-appointed task. One difficulty, happily rare, she met in Borneo during a visit to Rajah Brooke. We give Miss North's account of it. "I came on a lovely spray of a white orchid and picked it grudgingly to paint, then suddenly found that every tree was loaded with the same, and the boathouse roof looked as if there had been a sudden snowstorm. The air was scented with it, so I got more; and when I reached the house found the drawing-room full of it. They called it the Turong Bird, and said it came out spontaneously into bloom three times in the year and *only lasted a day;* and that I must be quick and draw it, for I should find none the next day. It was true: the next day the lovely flowers were hanging like rags." We have not space for more extracts from this delightful work, which we have found among the brightest and most readable records of unconventional travel that we have ever handled.

THAT ODD MAN.

"HERE, I say; do you want a job?"

Mr. Harford, the principal farmer of the out-of-the-way little Essex village of Steepleton, looked flushed and slightly aggrieved, which was hardly to be wondered at, seeing that he had been up even before the sun to-day, and had been driving in all directions about his large farm, making sure that the haymakers pressed on with their work with all possible speed. The worst of having a very good crop of hay is that it is such a disappointment when the rain comes down at the last moment and spoils half of it. The signs of the sky, however, and the way the barometer had gone back at the repeated taps of Mr. Harford's substantial forefinger had made him rather nervous. The man addressed looked up lazily.

"What sort of a job?" he asked smiling, his pleasant, refined voice contrasting strangely with his sunburnt face and rough clothes. But Mr. Harford was too much in a hurry to notice this.

"Why, getting up the hay, of course," he said. "It won't be half a day's work, but I'll give you half-a-crown."

"Right you are," said the other man. "Where am I to go to?"

"Here, jump up and I'll drive you," answered the farmer, delighted to have got an extra worker. "I suppose you've been in the hayfield before?" he added as they drove rapidly up a lane towards an old-fashioned farm-house. "What's your name?"

"Theobald," he answered, with difficulty subduing a desire to laugh outright.

"Ah, we call it Tibbald about here. There, that's the field I want you to begin in. Just tell that man in the red-and-white shirt that I've sent you, and he'll tell you what to do." And having put down his new labourer Mr. Harford drove triumphantly up to his house. There he alighted, and passing through the hall and down a long passage he entered a large, low room which was the general sitting-room at the farm, and was at present occupied by three girls.

"Here, Lucy, Nettie," he said, "you might come out for a little while and help. That confounded glass keeps going back and I'm afraid we shall have rain this evening. You can't do much, but every little's of use. You can come and look on if you like, Alice," he added, turning to the third girl, whose complexion, hands, and dress made her seem rather out of her element beside her sturdy, sunburnt cousins.

"Indeed, uncle, I shall do no such thing," she answered gaily. "I ought to be much more inclined to work than they are, as they have been all the morning at that provoking butter, while I did nothing but get in their way and eat an enormous amount of cream with those lovely strawberries Fred got for me. No, I shall take a pitchfork or something and show that I am not utterly useless."

And in a few minutes the three girls were in the meadow working as energetically as anyone. The maidservants had already been pressed into the service, so that the large twenty-acre field presented quite a gay appearance.

"Don't you think it would be better if you held your rake rather higher up? You wouldn't have to stoop quite so much then."

Alice looked up. A quarter of an hour's experience of raking in the hot sun had made her wonder however any human being could endure a whole day of it. The "odd man" whom her uncle had proudly pointed out to her as one of the best workers in the field, was addressing her.

"Perhaps it would," she answered, straightening herself with difficulty. "You see, this is my first attempt. How ought I to hold it?"

"Like this," he said, taking the rake into his own hands. Then, giving it back to her, he adjusted her small white fingers with his own. Alice felt herself blush, but the sun had already given her far too much colour for that to be noticeable. He moved away before she had time to thank him, and just then Nettie, who had noticed her cousin's peculiar style of haymaking, came up to assist her, and under her experienced tuition Alice worked on steadily throughout the afternoon, pretending that she enjoyed it and utterly declining to leave off before the rest. But right glad was she when, at five o'clock, Mrs. Harford appeared carrying a large tray of tea and lemonade, which she deposited under a wide-spreading beech, and then having arranged a comfortable circle of rugs and cushions around it she sat down and called to her husband and daughters to join her.

In the meantime the maidservants had carried large supplies of bread and cheese and beer to another corner of the field, and in a few moments work had ceased and everyone was enjoying a well-earned rest.

"Dear me!" said Alice, sinking on to a cushion with a sigh of relief. "I couldn't have imagined that I should ever be so tired. I don't believe I shall ever be able to move again even as far as the house. You'll have to build a tent over me here for me to live in."

"Or else carry you in," said her cousin Fred, who had managed, to his great satisfaction, to get a seat next to her. "That wouldn't be very difficult."

"That odd man works well," said Mr. Harford, drinking an enormous cupful of tea and then asking for some lemonade. "I hope they'll see that he gets everything he wants."

Alice broke into a light laugh.

"Do you often get gentlemen to work for you, uncle?" she asked. "This man spoke to me, and I think that he must have accepted your offer of work just for a joke."

"Oh, we often get men who have gone down in the

world who are glad of a job," answered Mr. Harford carelessly. "This man looked shabby enough for anything."

"But do they all wear diamond rings as this man does?" went on Alice. "And gold sleeve links?"

"A diamond ring! Not really, Alice," said Mrs. Harford agitatedly. "And he's been put down to bread and cheese with the labourers! Fred, you'd better go and ask him to come here and have tea with us. Which man is it?"—turning to her husband.

"Oh, you'll know him by his diamond ring," laughed Alice, as Fred started somewhat reluctantly on his errand. "Perhaps it isn't a real one, or he may have stolen it," she added mischievously.

"My dear Alice," began her aunt; but her remarks were cut short by the return of Fred with the stranger. Mr. Harford looked at him carefully and then got up.

"I hope you will excuse me, sir," he said; "but I think I made a mistake in asking you to help me here to-day. I'd had so much to do for the last few days that I really didn't notice that you weren't a common man—I mean that you weren't a——" and he paused a moment as he felt that he was not exactly saying the right thing. The other man laughingly cut short his apologies.

"Don't mention it," he said. "I'm sure I looked disreputable enough for anything. It's a good thing I didn't meet a policeman or I might have been arrested on suspicion."

"And to think that you were going to sit down with all those common people!" put in Mrs. Harford in scandalised tones. "I'm sure it was most careless of Robert; and if my niece hadn't told us of our mistake we should have treated you just like the rest of the labourers. Won't you sit down here between my niece and myself"—the place poor Fred had just vacated—"Oh, and I ought to introduce you. Mr.—Theobald I think you said, didn't you, Robert?—my niece, Miss Wilson. And let me give you a cup of tea."

Cuthbert Theobald bowed and sat down.

"I hope it wasn't my style of working that made you think I wasn't a professional haymaker," he said. "I was happily imagining that I was doing it in quite the proper way, and was really looking forward to receiving the promised half-crown this evening."

Alice laughed. "I don't think even that would induce me to try haymaking again," she said. "You evidently noticed that I was a beginner. If it hadn't been for your instruction I think I should have been in several pieces by this time."

And so the conversation went on while they rested and drank their tea; kept up for the most part by Alice and the visitor, though Mrs. Harford put in a few remarks occasionally to show that she was quite at her ease and accustomed to entertaining strangers, and the farmer himself was politely apologetic every five minutes. The two girls only spoke when they were spoken to, but Fred wouldn't even do that, and preferred to sit in a state of sulky jealousy, which, however, did not affect his appetite.

After tea, everyone except Alice began work again, and kept at it with such a will that by eight o'clock the last of the many long rows of haycocks was completed, and Mr. Harford stood watching the tired workers troop off with a satisfied expression on his face. Then he walked across to where Cuthbert Theobald was talking to Miss Wilson.

"I'm sure I'm very much obliged to you, Mr. Theobald, for helping us," he said. "One good worker makes a lot of difference."

"That's one for me, isn't it, uncle?" inquired Alice saucily. "But it's no good you thinking you can do Mr. Theobald out of his half-crown by polite speeches. He says he won't let you off your bargain on any account."

So the half-crown was offered and accepted; and then the farmer suddenly thought of asking where his new labourer was stopping.

"Well, to tell the truth, I'm not stopping anywhere," answered the young man. "I had my things sent on to Witham, and I intended to get there myself to-day. How far is it? I should think I had better be starting."

"Witham!" said Mrs. Harford, who had just come up to them. "Why, it's seven miles from here by the fields and you'd be sure to lose your way, even if you could have walked after all the work you've been doing. No; you must stop here to-night. We've got plenty of rooms and it will be no trouble."

"Well, if it really won't inconvenience you," he answered, after a moment's hesitation, "I should like to very much. I don't really think that I could manage the seven miles just now, especially as it is getting so dark, and I should have to take the chance of getting lost."

"Of course you couldn't," said Mrs. Harford decidedly. "Alice, if you are going in, will you tell them to get a room ready for Mr. Theobald? Supper won't be ready for half-an-hour, so perhaps you would like to sit out here for a little while." And then she sat down herself and began entertaining her visitor with long and varied pieces of family history. She told him that Alice, who was paying them a flying visit, was a governess in London.

"Though really," the good lady went on confidentially, "there is no need for her to do anything of the sort, as we are always begging her to come and live with us. I suppose she gets her independence from her father, who was a curate here and married my husband's sister. They both died young. But perhaps you would like to go upstairs now. I'm sure your room must be ready, and you must be longing for your supper."

The next day, which was Sunday, was wet after all, so that Mr. Harford had some reason to congratulate himself on having got his hay up safely, and therefore he was in a highly satisfied state of mind. He insisted on his visitor stopping till the next day, as it was much too wet for him to walk to Witham; and the farmer always made a rule of giving his animals an entire day of rest on the Sunday.

"You can get away early to-morrow," he said, "as I have to drive into Witham for my niece to catch an early train."

So Cuthbert Theobald stopped on and very much enjoyed his visit. The old-fashioned ways of the farm-house were delightful—for a day or two. And then there was Alice to talk to—Alice, who seemed so well read on all subjects, and who played so brilliantly on the fine Erard which Mr. Harford had bought for his daughters to perform their ponderous and much-studied duets upon, that for the first time in their lives her cousins began to faintly understand why it was that she preferred even earning her own living in the wider town life to sharing their quiet and uneventful lot here in the depths of the country. But all things have an end, and the next morning saw Mr. Theobald and Miss Wilson walking up and down the Witham platform together.

Mr. Harford had driven them into the little town, but as he found that there was twenty minutes to wait, and he was anxious to be back to his hay, it being a fine day, he had commissioned Cuthbert to see his niece off. They felt quite like old friends by this time, and both were sorry when the train which was to part them steamed into the station.

"I hope very much that we shall meet again soon," he said. "I shall be up in town before long. Do you think that your—that I might call and see you? You have never told me yet where you are living."

"'HOW OUGHT I TO HOLD IT?'" (*p.* 499).

Alice considered for a moment. Inclination and prudence pulled in opposite directions.

"I think that it would be better not to," she said at last. "I don't think that Mrs. Etherington would like it. Perhaps we may happen to meet again, at the farm or elsewhere."

"Perhaps you are right," said her companion, smiling to himself as he helped her into the carriage. "But I hope we shall meet." And then the train started.

* * * * * *

A month later, when the hot July sun was making life in London rather a burden than otherwise, and all who were able to do so were thinking of packing up and fleeing to the country or abroad, on the afternoon of one of the hottest days Cuthbert Theobald was walking slowly up Park Lane. He stopped at a house where the lobelias and scarlet geraniums in the window-boxes seemed to have resigned themselves to their fate, and the striped awnings, which had looked so gay at the beginning of the season, hung limply as if too weary even to make a pretence of giving any shade. A carriage was standing outside, and, before he had time to ring, the door opened and a not very young, well-dressed woman came out.

"My dear Cuthbert," she exclaimed effusively, but in a slightly injured tone of voice, "how glad I am to see you. But how provoking it is that I positively have to be out for the next three-quarters of an hour! Would you mind waiting till I come back? I have to go and see a person I think of engaging as governess. She'll be the fifth I've seen this week. The one who's with me now is going. Such a nuisance. Something had been bothering me one day and I gave her notice. Of course I didn't mean it, but now she insists on going, and I must find someone to take into the country with us. *Au revoir.* I dare say someone will come in to talk to you. I told them to say that I should be back directly." And in another minute her smart victoria was out of sight.

Cuthbert entered the house. He was quite used to his cousin's vagaries by this time, and, besides, it was not his cousin that he had come to see after all. For the last month he had been considering a certain subject, and it was only yesterday that he had made up his mind and come to town.

He passed by the empty drawing-room and through a baize door into a rather gloomy passage. From somewhere close at hand arose that confused murmur which generally betokens that some youthful minds are engaged in acquiring knowledge, willingly or otherwise. He opened the door softly and looked in. A girl was seated at one end of a table, round which four children were ranged. English history was the order of the day.

"Oh, Cuthbert," screamed four young voices. "What a good thing it is you've come! Now we can leave off lessons, can't we, Miss Wilson?"

"Yes, do let them off, Miss Wilson. It's so much too hot for them."

The girl looked round. A glad look sprang to her eyes as she rose and touched the young man's outstretched hand. The last month, which had seemed one of the loneliest she had ever spent, was forgotten, and she seemed to be back in the hayfield again.

When Mrs. Etherington returned she was not too pleased to find her cousin talking almost confidentially with the governess, while the children were for once reduced to silence, being engaged in a drawing competition, a half-crown lying on the table ready for the winner. She promptly conveyed Cuthbert to the drawing-room.

"I'm so glad you were able to amuse yourself while I was out," she said. "Miss Wilson's a nice girl, isn't she? But sometimes, you know, her manner strikes me as being rather forward."

"I've met Miss Wilson before, but somehow it never struck me in that light," he answered drily.

"Oh, of course, that makes a difference," said Mrs. Etherington, as she mentally resolved to keep the governess out of the way for the future.

However, Mrs. Etherington managed to keep her governess so much in the background that, though Cuthbert went to the house almost every day, yet he very seldom saw her, and that never alone. Chance nevertheless brought them together again. It was in the Park one afternoon that Miss Wilson suddenly found herself walking beside Mr. Theobald.

"I've just been trying for another situation," she explained after he had asked permission to walk back with her. "I shan't get it though. Lady Miles said that I was satisfactory in every way, but that she thought I looked much too young."

"Then I suppose you'll go to Steepleton when my cousin vacates her house next week?" said Cuthbert interrogatively.

"Not till I've found another situation," she said firmly, "even if I have to stay at a governesses' home till I get it. Then perhaps I might."

"But aren't you rather tired of teaching?" he asked. "I should be."

"It's no use being tired," she answered briskly. "There's nothing else for me to be, unless I go as a companion, and that's worse."

"A companion!" said Cuthbert meditatively. "That depends very much on the person. It mightn't be so bad. Now I happen to know a person just now who wants a companion——"

"Oh, do you?" said Alice. "Is she nice?"

"Not bad," he answered. "But it's not a she. It's——"

"Not one of those invalid gentlemen who try to get a nurse under another name? Someone wanted me to take one of those places a little while ago. And, besides, the friends of the invalid gentleman always say you want to marry him."

"But this one does want you to marry him," went on Cuthbert quickly. "Can't you see what I mean? I'm very lonely, and I think a foreign tour would do me a lot of good if I had someone nice like you to go with me. We could be married next month, couldn't we?"

"But I haven't accepted the situation yet," said Alice.

"You will though, won't you? I'm sure you will. I think you care for me a little, don't you?"

"I think perhaps I do," she answered softly.

"I'm afraid I didn't ask you at all in the proper way, but then——"

"Of course I should never have expected you to be anything but original," she interrupted archly; "for, you know, the first time I saw you you were pointed out to me as an 'odd man.,"

ARTHUR T. G. PRICE.

CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.—WHAT TO WEAR IN JULY.

FROM OUR PARIS AND LONDON CORRESPONDENTS.

I.—FROM OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.

IN Paris there is a marked peculiarity just now in the current modes; a disinclination on the part of the dressmakers to show many seams, while they leave as much as possible to chance. At least they wish you to think so, but it is not at all the case really. Linings to bodices are most carefully boned and are fitted with more than ordinary care, so that the material worn over them can hardly fail to adjust itself to the figure when cut most carefully, but apparently it does so without any care at all, and every fastening is ably concealed.

Those of you who contrive your dresses for yourselves and happen to have a good fitting bodice by you, would be able to arrange upon it, after the sketch on the next page, a simple little *fête* dress which could be worn at home for quiet evenings or for many other occasions when very full dress is not a necessity. If the foundation bodice has a point this can be cut away or hidden by placing the skirt over it.

I want you to note carefully the cut of this particular skirt. French women are not wearing long trailing dresses, the skirts rest some seven or eight inches on the ground, so that they are easily held up if required. They are plain in front and at the sides, the fulness is all arranged in the centre of the back in single pleats, those on either side turning towards the middle. The upper portion of this model is covered with white muslin guipure, and the full sleeves reaching to the elbow are gathered over tight undersleeves of the material. In cutting your sleeves, remember that you do not need to produce an appearance of length, but only breadth; but, in this particular instance, the sleeves are made higher by a crossway frill gathered on the point of the shoulder and tacked to the under-part of the arm. The bodice is formed, both back and front, of two crossing-pieces, held in place by a couple of bands of ribbon, one round the waist and one a little higher above it. The ends of this sash are knotted, and fall at the side and have fringe at the edges. In hot July days this would be a most excellent style.

Pink is the colour that certainly has the preference over all others, but the materials are truly charming. There is a host of pretty little mousseline delaines, with printed rosebuds meandering over the cream grounds, daisies, or forget-me-nots, or any other tiny floweret which is associated in our minds with china tea-cups and those happy days that Marie Antoinette spent at the Trianon, when she and the great ladies of her court played at being dairymaids, and certainly idealised the position if pretty dresses can do it.

We are reminded of the unfortunate queen in nearly every department of present-day dress. We wear the same dainty high-heeled shoes, and the muslin frilled fichus which bear her name repeat themselves in a hundred different ways, but I think I like them best in chiffon when the ends disappear in the waistband. If you want to make one, let me advise you to take a square of the widest make of the material. Fold it equally corner-wise across the centre, round off the centre points, and then ascertain the exact length you want it, and shorten your ends accordingly. The frills should have a heading cut five inches deep. Hem both edges and gather them so that they are twice as full as the foundation, and there is a heading of three quarters of an inch. Sew these at both edges of the double material, and drape the fichu on your own figure, tacking it here and there, in order that it may always adjust itself. You will have a useful adjunct to your wardrobe that will improve any dress you wear on almost any occasion.

I am wondering greatly whether in England women will adopt the elbow sleeves and long gloves for out-of-door wear. Our great ladies have had no hesitation in doing so. The full puff sleeve ends at the elbow in a frill of either lisse or lace, and the only coverings to the rest of the arm are the long ruffled gloves. If, however, you have not the courage to face such a great change in our preconceived notions, you can obviate the difficulty by having a tight-fitting piece from the elbow to the wrist, and wearing the long gloves over that. I fancy a good many Englishwomen are likely to do that this season.

There are many new styles in sleeves, one of which I have shown you in the initial vignette. If you notice, there is a fully gathered puff at the top of the sleeve, which is cut sufficiently large to draw into a band at the wrist, having a frill of the material below. It is trimmed with a band of black velvet which also hides the join of the puff, and three rows of the same form the waistcoat. The little girl wears quite the new style of dress—the actual bodice matching the skirt having only a narrow band on the

shoulder just sufficient to keep the sleeve in its place. It is cut V-shaped back and front. There are no seams under the arm, and the revers is narrow at the waist and deeper at the top. The vacuum is filled in with a full white shirt trimmed with a gathered frill which you can easily compass. You have simply to hem the material, and allow it to be of a depth of four inches. Gather it and sew it to the skirt in order that it may fall straight down from the neck, and then gather it much fuller to let it fall in a cascade down the front, which it will do naturally in the most easy folds.

Grown-up women and children alike are wearing shirts of all kinds, and I strongly recommend the belts and bodices cut in one, so that they can be slipped on over the shirt; and they are improved by straight braces of ribbon, carried from the side of the waist in front to the same distance in the centre of the waist at the back, with just a long flat bow placed on the shoulders. There is no difficulty in making these, it is simply a matter of fitting them on to the person by whom they are required. If, however, you wish to wear a belt, I will tell you of the newest French kind. It is made of a strong, firm satin ribbon, about six inches wide, which is fitted round the waist and fastened quite invisibly under the arm. But on either side of the waist, back and front, there is a row of small rosettes made of narrow ribbon. This is improved by braces of either open-work jet gimp, or of ribbon, but they are not essential.

Long coat tails are still affected by Frenchwomen, and the right-hand figure in our sketch is a good example of this class of dress. The model is made with a band of green velvet round the skirt, and a green velvet bodice with plain wool or silk revers and cuffs to match the skirt. The waistcoat is of white silk embroidered in gold, and it is finished at the neck by a waterfall tie, generally made of chiffon edged with lace.

We are sending over to England from Paris any number of pretty hats trimmed with flowers. If you procure good flowers there is little difficulty in trimming, for the crowns are almost hidden by the blooms; indeed, a great many are nothing more nor less than a flat circle of straw, the aperture for the crown so arranged that the brim is wide in front and narrow at the back, the crown being formed of a wreath of roses with feathers, either of ostrich plumes shaped like a ram's horn, or of cocks' feathers.

A LITTLE DIFFICULTY.

II.—FROM OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENT.

In 1854 and 1855 England was at daggers drawn with Russia, but that is so many years ago that we have forgotten it all, and we are now so friendly with our Northern allies that we are following her fashions in a number of ways, and I have tried to present to you one of the fashionable Russian blouses which can be most easily reproduced, and I think is best suited to our slender English beauties. Almost any of the nimble-fingered girls among my readers could with an easily-obtained paper pattern make this garment for herself. It is full back and front, and there are only seams under the arm. It is not really cut in one as it appears at the first glance, but a straight all-round basque is sewn on to the waist-band, which is hidden beneath the belt. This belt as well as the collar-band and wrist-bands can be made of leather, or also just as well of the material bound with folds of brown red and blue combined. I dare say in London it would be possible to obtain a real Russian trimming, in Paris it would be quite an easy matter. It is a rough galon woven like the trimmings seen in a railway carriage after the nature of woollen terry velvet, and in the combined colours of which I have spoken. The buttons should be metal, silver worked with black if possible, in imitation of the so-called Niello

TO CATCH THE POST.

metal work for which Russia is famous. Russian shirts are simple and more easy to put on properly than many seen in England. They are generally arranged in white linen with three gathered bands round the neck and at the waist with a deep frill below. The sleeves form one full puff to the elbow, meeting the shaped armlets worn close fitting to the wrist. The bands are worked in cross stitch with Russian colours—red, blue, yellow, and brown. It is very easy work which anyone could do, and patterns, easily ironed off on to the material, are to be bought for a few pence. This sort of trimming can, however, be replaced by ribbon, velvet, or muslin embroidery, but the blouses fit the figure well and are easily slipped on.

There is an outdoor garment, also Russian in its origin, and to my mind exceedingly comfortable, for it is a dress in itself, and when the weather is hot it really requires no gown beneath it. It is made much in the same style as the blouse in the picture, but is simply carried down longer, and a few straps of the trimming with the buttons are placed in three or four diagonal lines on the front.

Princess dresses are to be worn both for morning and evening not only in the summer but in the autumn. They can be slipped on in a moment, but they require most careful making. The picture shows a pretty style, which needs but little trimming. The front breadth is sewn farther back than the actual side pieces, so that a few inches of the material overlap, and have the appearance of being a dress over a petticoat. This opening on either side is bordered with lace which is carried on to the bodice trimming. The model was made of striped silk in two shades of blue, the lighter brocaded. It formed a fichu, the lace placed reverse ways being united by primrose ribbon, tied in a bow in the front. It also formed a pointed belt in the immediate front, and the colour was repeated at the throat and waist.

The new cut of skirts is certainly a great deal of trouble to people who wish to dress well and look their best and yet not spend a great deal of money. Very few of us can manage out of doors to hold up a long skirt gracefully, so I am sure you will be glad to hear that notwithstanding all that has been written, leading ladies of fashion in the country still wear short dresses, and that in town long skirts are looped up with one or more buttons, in the centre of the back, and even tailor-made gowns have the cross-cut back, and cotton dresses, when not sufficiently firm to stand by themselves, such as zephyrs, are lined with a thin calico, the two being stitched together at the seams, so that they stretch to the same extent in washing, and can be ironed perfectly well.

The make of washing dresses is extremely simple—a full front and a slightly fulled back with a point of about an inch in breadth back and front just outlined by a band of ribbon tied in a bow at the back. The sleeves are puffed to the elbow and tight to the wrist, and sometimes three bands of ribbon confine the fulness underneath the arms. The Eton jacket is the favourite kind. It is worn with shirts and over many sorts of bodices. It is exactly like those favoured by boys, and has silk revers in front.

I always like to tell you of ways to renovate the garments of a past season, so I am about to describe a new treatment of a bodice. Fawn and other kinds of corded cloths, and crépons in a plain tint, have the front entirely covered with a light coloured foulard—black printed in pink by preference. This addition is full, fastens at the side and ends in a passementerie trimming at the waist, which is carried up the back made of the same material as the skirt.

Parasols are trimmed with festoons of lace, while last year's lace parasols can be interthreaded with perpendicular rows of baby ribbon, and present quite a new face. Stockings have coloured feet united above the ankle to black tops. Grass green, for example, with a black pattern in cross-stitch is joined to the black uppers beneath pointed scroll work.

THE GATHERER:

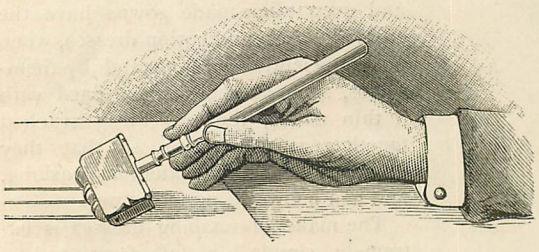
AN ILLUSTRATED RECORD OF INVENTION, DISCOVERY, LITERATURE, AND SCIENCE.

Correspondents are requested, when applying to the Editor for the names and addresses of the persons from whom further particulars respecting the articles in the GATHERER may be obtained, to forward a stamped and addressed envelope for reply, and in the case of inventors submitting specimens for notice, to prepay the carriage. The Editor cannot in any case guarantee absolute certainty of information, nor can he pledge himself to notice every article or work submitted.

Telling the South.

A SIMPLE method of determining the south point without the aid of a compass has recently attracted some attention, but for several years it has been taught to our Royal Engineer officers. As it is worthy of being generally known, and may be useful to Colonists, we shall briefly describe it. Hold a watch horizontally in your hand with the hour hand pointing to the centre of the sun. The south will then lie midway between the position of the hour hand at the time and twelve o'clock on the dial, counting backwards. Thus, if the hour hand points to 3 o'clock, the south will be in the direction of the 1.30 p.m. line. Again, if the hour hand is at 10 o'clock, the south will lie at 5 o'clock. The method is most correct a few hours before and after noon.

A Money-Column Ruler.



The ruler which we illustrate is intended to draw a set of money-columns at one operation. It consists of a roller with the necessary edges or ridges for the lines, which are inked by a spring-pad, so as to trace the lines when simply drawn down the paper.

Oil as an Insulator.

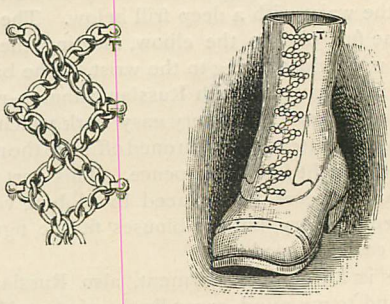
Oil promises to become the insulator of the future, especially for electric currents of very high potential and frequency; that is to say, the intense see-saw currents obtained from alternating-current dynamos and transformers. Such currents cannot be properly insulated with gutta-percha, india-rubber, or other solid insulators; but they can with liquid insulators. Moreover, when a solid insulator is penetrated by the spark, it is useless until the fault is cut out; whereas a liquid closes up the puncture, and repairs itself. Oil as an insulator was patented by Professor Hughes, F.R.S., as far back as 1859, but the time was not ripe for its adoption. He found that rosin oil was the best, and proposed to confine it in tubes with the wires inside. Rosin oil is thick, but it can be rendered more viscid by the addition of gum rosin and the residuum of palm oil. Professor Hughes has recently made further experiments with it, and finds that a layer $\frac{1}{19}$ inch thick is a better insulator than 5 inches of air. The spark from a Wimshurst influence machine will turn aside from this thickness of the oil and prefer to leap through the air. This is shown by the experiment of placing a layer of the oil in a glass vessel having a copper plate in the bottom connected in circuit with the machine. On bringing the sparking knob of the machine over the oil, the electricity, rather than go through the film of oil between it and the copper plate, flows up out of the vessel and down its outside through the air in a luminous sheet resembling the electrical cascade of Gassiot.

Balatah.

The chicle gum tree or balatah of British Guiana and Venezuela, is commonly called the "bullet tree." A somewhat different species of it grows also in Jamaica and Trinidad. The milky juice of the tree is drawn off by parallel incisions made in the bark and collected in a calabash. A tree twenty inches in diameter yields about 3 pints. The milk is poured into shallow wooden trays greased on the inside, and then allowed to dry in the sun. It is now fetching a high price as a superior sort of gutta-percha, for while it insulates electricity as well as the more familiar material, it is able to stand exposure better.

A Chain Lace.

The woodcut illustrates a handy device for fastening boots. The metal tags, T, T, are joined by a chain

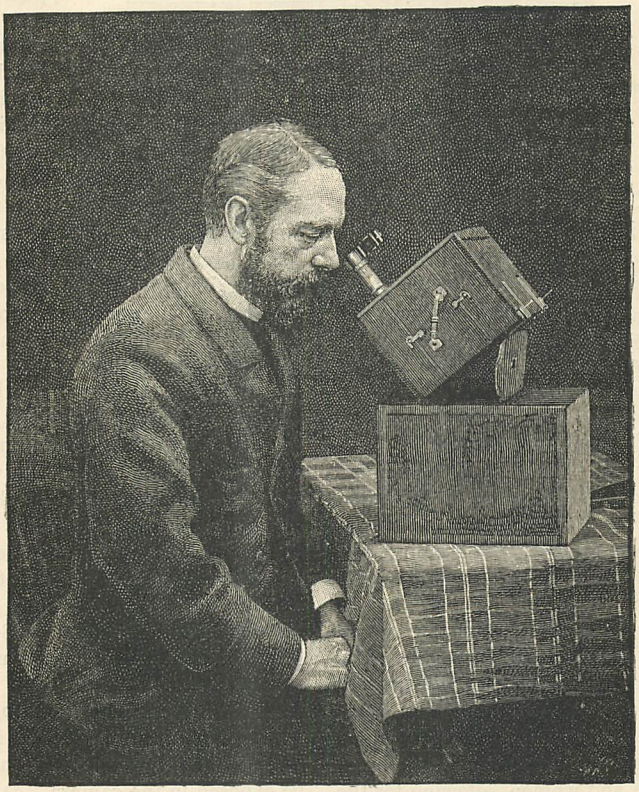


or chains in the manner shown, the links passing over the tags. The method appears an improvement on the ordinary lace, which is apt to work loose and draggle or wear out and break.

The Heliochromoscope.

Some twenty-seven years ago Mr. Henry Collen, painting master to Her Majesty the Queen, suggested

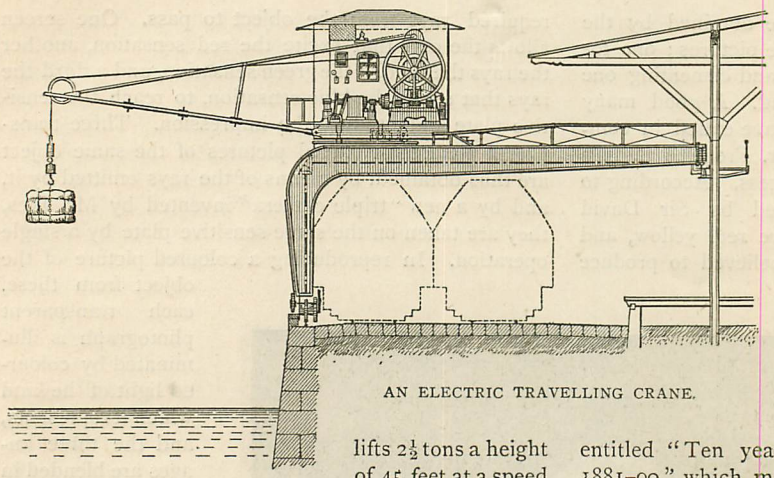
that colour photographs might be obtained by the composite process of making three pictures; one for each of the three primary colours and cementing one over the other on a white ground. A good many attempts to realise this method have ended in comparative failure; but at length Mr. Frederic E. Ives of Philadelphia has achieved success. According to the old theory of light advocated by Sir David Brewster, the primary colours are red, yellow, and blue, and a mixture of these was believed to produce white light. Helmholtz and others showed that instead of primary colours, there are primary or fundamental colour sensations, due possibly to the presence of three kinds of visual nerves in the eye, and that these simple sensations are red, green, and blue. All other colours are compound sensations; yellow, for example, can be produced by a mixture of red and green, and the yellow rays of the spectrum appear so only because they have power to excite both of these sensations at once, and equally. It follows that if we could take three photographs of an object, one reproducing the effect upon the nerves of the red sensation, one the effect upon the green, and a third the effect upon the blue, we might combine these into a single picture that would reproduce the original tints of the object. We cannot, however, take photographs giving even a single colour or monochrome, and hence it is necessary to take colourless or transparent images and to illuminate them by coloured light. This can be done by means of transparent coloured screens, and it is here that Mr. Ives has made one of his great advances on his predecessors in the same field. A screen of yellow glass, for example, interposed between the camera and the object, cuts off the blue rays from the latter and allows the red, yellow, and green, to pass to the camera. By careful experiments Mr. Ives has produced composite screens made chiefly of coloured glass, and gelatine films stained with aniline dyes, which permit only the required rays from the object to pass. One screen allows the rays that excite the red sensation, another the rays that excite the green sensation, and a third the rays that excite the blue sensation, to reach the sensitive plate and produce the impression. Three transparent pictures or partial pictures of the same object are thus obtained, by means of the rays emitted by it, and by a new "triple camera" invented by Mr. Ives, they are taken on the same sensitive plate by a single operation. In reproducing a coloured picture of the object from these, each transparent photograph is illuminated by coloured light of the kind which it represents, and the three images are blended in one. The coloured light is got by interposing screens of the proper colour between the image and a source of white light. The pictures can be projected on a screen by means of a magic lantern of special construction; and in his recent lecture at the Royal Institution Mr. Ives projected a number of lifelike views taken by himself in the Yellowstone Park. Mr. Ives also exhibited a small hand apparatus for reproducing the pictures. It is about as large as a drawing-room stereoscope, and fitted with an eyepiece. On looking into it the observer saw a bouquet of English flowers reproduced in their natural tints. It is probable also that a means will be worked out for printing the photographs in the natural colours of the objects, and for this purpose Mr. Ives considers the Woodburytype process the most promising. Although the method of Mr. Ives is not, strictly speaking, a solution of the problem how to photograph colours by simple exposure, it aims at the same end, namely the photographic depiction of objects in their natural hues, and it appears to have a great career before it.



MR. F. E. IVES USING THE HELIOCHROMOSCOPE.
(From a photograph by Mr. Cameron Swan.)

An Electric Travelling Crane.

The electric travelling crane shown in our engraving is at work in the harbour quays, Hamburg, where it



AN ELECTRIC TRAVELLING CRANE.

lifts 2½ tons a height of 45 feet at a speed of 200 feet a minute, and traverses at a speed of 400 feet a minute. Wire rope is employed instead of chain, and toothed wheels are avoided in the winding gear to secure silent motion. An electric motor drives one of three guide-wheels under the turn-table by worm gearing, and causes the crane to travel; while another works the hoisting gear by a worm spindle. Suitable electric brakes are provided to control the motions.

The Brains of Men and Women.

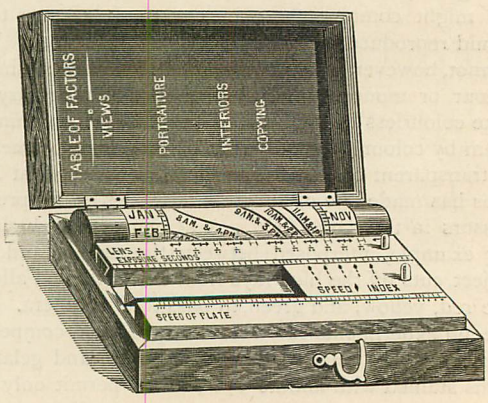
At a recent meeting of the Medical Society of London, Sir James Crichton Browne, F.R.S., expressed his opinion that the difference between the intellects of men and women was real, not seeming, and deeply founded on the structure of the brain. He showed, amongst other matters, that the average female brain is lighter than the average male brain, and would still be so were women as large and heavy as men. Moreover, the specific gravity of the grey substance of the male brain is higher than that of the female, while the specific gravity of the white substance is the same in both. While the total supply of blood to the brain is much the same in men and women (allowing for the comparative poverty of female blood in corpuscles), the distribution of the blood is different, the larger part going to the front of the male brain, and to the back of the female brain. The front is the seat of cognition, volition, and the ideo-motor processes, while the back is mainly concerned in the discharge of sensory functions. These anatomical considerations bear out the conclusions of such great writers as Milton and Thackeray, and, assuming them to be accurate, Sir James Crichton Browne uttered a warning against the present tendency to over-educate women by instructing them like men.

Climate and Sunspots.

It is believed by many meteorologists that when the number of spots on the sun is at a minimum, which it is every eleven years or thereabout, the general temperature of the earth's atmosphere is higher, and, speaking roundly, the weather is warmer. Dr. Köppen has shown that this relationship holds well for the tropics, but is not so evident in approaching the poles. Mr. A. B. MacDowal, however, has recently demonstrated by curves of the mean temperature, and solar spots from the year 1812 to 1892, that in spite of our cloudy skies the connection is apparent even at London. Sunspots are supposed to be solar cyclones, and it would appear that when these are scarce the earth receives more sunshine. We may also mention that the Meteorological Council has issued a pamphlet entitled "Ten years' Sunshine in the British Isles 1881–90," which may be useful to persons in search of health or pleasure. The observations were made at forty-six stations all over the country. For sunny weather the island of Jersey stands at the head of the list, except during the month of November. London, with its damp air and cloudy skies, is very low in the scale. The seaside is sunnier than inland, a remark which many have made for themselves on running out of town for a change. The country is sunnier as a rule than the large manufacturing towns. Ireland as a whole is sunnier than most parts of England in the late autumn, which is the holiday time of a good many. As to months, May is the sunniest and December the gloomiest. June and July are good months, February and April have also a considerable share of sunshine; so has August, except in the north-western parts of Ireland and Scotland. September and October show a falling off in sunshine, nevertheless the month of September, especially the first half, is a good month in many parts of Scotland.

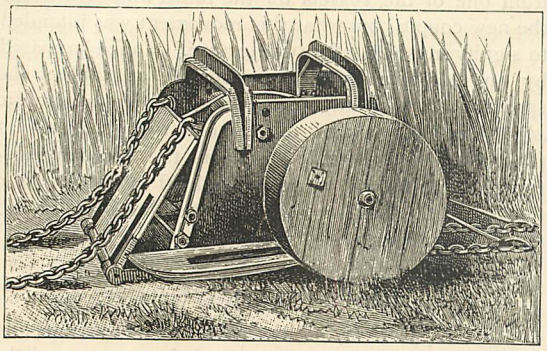
The Actinograph.

The apparatus which we illustrate is designed to calculate the time which a photographic plate should be exposed in the camera. It does not require the use of any exposure tables. All the operator has to do is to turn round the small barrel seen next the hinges of the box, on which are engraved the iso-actinic lines for every hour of the day throughout the year. Scales are



also provided which indicate the apertures of lenses employed, the different intensities of lights, and another is used to agree with the speed of the plate, which is known. The instrument is small and will be useful to the amateur as well as to the professional photographer.

A New Pond-Dredger.



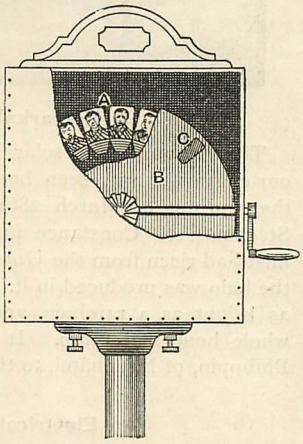
The mud scoop for cleaning ponds and canals which we illustrate was recently tried with success at Froyle Park, Alton, Hampshire. It consists of a box-shaped receiver mounted on hollow wheels allowing the bottom of the machine to slide on the ground. When it has been drawn to the other side of the pond, the end is closed up by means of chains, and in drawing it back again the box acts as a scoop. A hauling engine can be employed, and a ton of mud taken out of the bottom at every journey.

The Railway up Pike's Peak.

The mountain railways up the Rigi, Mount Pilatus, and Vesuvius have now a rival in that recently opened in the Far West, from Manitou to the summit of Pike's Peak in Colorado. This noted prairie landmark was discovered and named by Major Zebulon Pike in 1806, and is 14,336 feet above the level of the sea. Its summit is covered with perpetual snow, and it affords a magnificent prospect of the Rocky Mountain chain on the west, and the illimitable plains on the east. Manitou, which lies among the picturesque foot-hills at its base, is becoming celebrated as a watering place, owing to its nearly perfect climate, the medicinal properties of its mineral springs, and its charming scenery. Manitou was only founded a few years ago, and now it has as many as 125,000 visitors a year. The Peak was first utilised by the War Department as a signal station, and tourists ascending to the station spread the reputation of its scenery. Horse trails were made along the streams. That known as Ruxton Trail, bordering on the beautiful Ruxton Creek, and the most direct and interesting road from Manitou, became the favourite path to the summit, seven miles distant. It is by this route that the new railway passes. The preliminary surveys were begun on April 1st, 1888, by Mr. D. E. Briggs, chief engineer of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, when Mr. Richardson, a surveyor, and his assistants were snowed-up in the old Government signal-house for four days, till hunger compelled them to join the main party, which was only one and a half miles distant. It took them ten and a half hours to accomplish the distance. Grading began on September 28th, 1889, and finished the following year. The track is of the standard gauge, with steel rails, and the locomotive climbs the steep grades by means of six cog-wheels working into two serrated rails laid between the ordinary rails, after the manner of a rack and pinion. The system is that of Abt employed in Switzerland, and is perfectly safe. The line is eight and three quarters miles long, and rises 7,500 feet; the steepest grade having a rise of one foot in every four feet of horizontal distance. Nearly half the line is on curves, the bridges are of iron and masonry, and the steepest parts of the track are securely anchored. There are two coaches to a train, each holding fifty passengers, and the journey is made in less than two hours, including a stoppage at Halfway House; a beautiful retreat in Ruxton Park. Splendid views are to be had, on the way up, more especially that from "Windy Point" beyond the headwaters of Ruxton Creek. From here a distinct view of Manitou, Colorado City, and Colorado Springs, is obtained, together with the "Cathedral Spires," and the "Great Gateway" of the "Garden of the Gods." The summit is of granite, and an hotel has been built there for the convenience of tourists. There is little doubt that Pike's Peak, which is familiar to readers of Ruxton's "Life in the Far West" and other "trappers' books," will henceforth become an objective point for the ubiquitous tourist, and the seeker after health.

The Phonoscope.

In a recent GATHERER we announced that M. Dumeny had succeeded in taking a series of instantaneous photographs of the lips and face of a speaker, and in recombining them by a zoetrope arrangement so as to give a single photographic image which reproduced the original movements of the lips. The figure gives a view of his combining apparatus or phonoscope, with part of the back removed. The transparent positives are arranged in a series round the periphery of a revolving disc, A, which is turned by the handle, and a circular screen, B, having a single aperture or window, C, is also revolved at a much higher velocity from the same spindle by suitable gearing. An eye-piece, not shown, allows the observer to see the photographs through the window, and the velocities of the plates and window are so adjusted as to combine all the images in one while giving it the appearance of animation; an effect due, as is



well known, to the fact that a luminous image lingers on the retina for about a tenth of a second. A deaf-mute accustomed to read what a person is saying by the motion of his lips can do the same thing on looking at the "speaking photograph," and it would seem that we may in future possess albums of photographs which actually smile at us and speak inaudibly. Of course, with the addition of a phonograph the actual sounds might, at the same time, be heard by the observer.

A Remarkable Halo.

The extraordinary solar halo which is depicted in our engraving was seen between seven and eight on the morning of March 28th last, on the road from Steckborn to Constance in Switzerland. A fog or mist had risen from the Untersee on the left hand, and the halo was produced in it. Each arc and circle was as bright as a rainbow, and the effect lasted for a whole hour and more. It was seen by Mr. C. A. Philippin, of Neuchâtel, to the E.S.E of the road.

An Electrical Wedding.

Electricity was made to minister at the shrine of Hymen recently in a way which deserves to be recorded. As soon as the wedding guests sat down, the room was brilliantly lit up by clusters of particoloured glow lamps hid amongst the foliage and other decorations. The advent of the bride and bridegroom was hailed by the ringing of electric bells and the playing of electrical instruments. After the first course of the wedding feast, the lights were turned half-down and miniature glow-lamps, concealed amongst the flowers on the table, began to shine like glow-worms and fireflies. Translucent vases of the finest glass and porcelain were also lighted up from within. A tiny lamp gleamed in the bride's hair. A toast having been given, two artificial serpents uncoiled from one of the vessels on the table, and confronted the new couple; but what this movement was intended to signify must be left to conjecture. Coffee prepared by an electrical heater was served at table; the speeches were loudly applauded by an automatic *claque* in the shape of an electrical kettledrum placed under the table; and as the company dispersed, the electric current fired off a pyrotechnic display in the garden. It is perhaps needless to add that the wedding took place in Baltimore.

New Memorial Tablets.

The comparatively high price of marble, granite, and other stone memorials of the dead, for graves, and the perishable nature of wood, has led to the introduction of a cement head-stone. The piece is moulded of the desired pattern and with the names in relief or intaglio. Slots are also left for the insertion of other names at a future time, the slots being temporarily filled up. The tablet is only about one-fourth the price of a stone one, and it is estimated to last for a century at least.

A Land-link with America.

The ancient tradition of a lost continent of Atlantis in the western ocean may have some foundation in fact after all, and America, as has been thought, is perhaps the missing region. At a recent meeting of the French Academy of Sciences, M. Emile Blanchard read a paper setting forth a remarkable array of facts tending to prove that within our own geological period Labrador was connected to Europe by a tongue or link of land running from Scotland through the Orkney and Faroe Islands to Iceland and Greenland. Many years ago the same idea occurred to Sir John Richardson, and Professor E. Forbes, the naturalist. The sea over this tract is comparatively shallow, and the islands in question are, he thinks, vestiges of the submerged land. The most convincing evidence for his theory is found in the fact that European animals and plants exist in America along with species which are peculiar to the western continent. Anemones, violets, roses, even orchises and lilies are common to both; certain beetles, spiders, and other "creeping things" of slow gait are also to be found on either side of the Atlantic; the reindeer of Lapland is plentiful in Hudson Bay; the beaver is a native of the two continents, and so is the river perch, which never leaves fresh water. Perhaps the most striking proof, however, is the fact, not cited by M. Blanchard and but recently made out, that while the flora of West Greenland is peculiarly American, that of East Greenland is European. This revived theory may help to explain that crux of anthropology, the origin of the American-Indian races.

Indigo Green.

Herr V. H. Soxhlet, a German chemist, has discovered a fine green dye by treating indigo-carmine with liquid ammonia. One part of carmine to five parts of ammonia gives a beautiful shade, after the mixture has stood some time. The green solution mixed with dilute sulphuric acid till it has a slight acid reaction is used for dyeing wool, and the colour is quite fast. The discoverer is preparing to manufacture the new dye on a large scale.

"In Rosby Village."

We have received from Messrs. Oliphant, Anderson, & Ferrier, a copy of this short but very readable story by one of our prize-winners, "Mary Hampden," the author of "The Heiress of Aberstone." It is a story of a coast village, and has a measure of adventure in its composition which gives it great interest.

Object Lessons in Science.

We have spoken before of the "Elementary Science Lessons" which have been prepared by Mr. W. Hewitt, B Sc., for Messrs. Longmans. In the form of practical object lessons with simple and easily-managed experiments, Mr. Hewitt manages to teach some of the elementary facts of the physical world with great lucidity, and in a manner well calculated to fix the matter upon the minds of scholars. We have now before us the volume in this series for the Fourth Standard, in which are given thirty-six eminently practical and very varied lessons.

"Heroes of Britain."

Messrs. Cassell have just completed the issue in two volumes of a new edition of their "Heroes of Britain in Peace and War," which is now published at a price which brings it within the reach of almost every household. As the title implies, the heroes are not only those of the battle-field, but also those whose laurels were won in the fields of philanthropy, discovery, and industry. The two volumes are full of illustrations, and would form a handsome present, particularly for any boy.

NEW STORY COMPETITION.

OPEN TO ALL READERS OF "CASSELL'S MAGAZINE."

OF all the Competitions which have been opened in connection with this Magazine, the most generally popular have been the Story Competitions, which have been instrumental in bringing forward many writers formerly unknown to the MAGAZINE. The Editor has, therefore, pleasure in offering three Prizes of £50, £40, and £30 respectively for the First-, Second-, and Third-best stories of domestic interest, bright in style, original in plot, and adapted for family reading, and for serial use in this Magazine. Each story must be divided into six parts of not less than 7,500, or more than 9,000, words each. Every manuscript must be accompanied by a short outline (about 500 words in length) of its plot, and also by a plan showing how that plot is developed in each of the six parts of the story. All manuscripts must comply with the general regulations given below, and be in our hands not later than December 1st, 1892.

The following are the GENERAL REGULATIONS under which these Prizes are offered :—

1. Every reader of the Magazine (not being an ordinary contributor to its pages, or the winner of the first prize in a former story competition, in connection with this Magazine) is eligible to enter the competition.

2. The Editor cannot undertake to answer inquiries having reference to the treatment of manuscripts in detail. *The particulars given are sufficient for the purposes of the competition, and everything else is left to the judgment and discretion of the competitors.*

3. All communications regarding MSS. entered for the above competition must be sent in the same packets with the MSS. No previous or subsequent communications (except under Rule 7) can receive any consideration. The award of the judges will be published in the Magazine as soon after the close of the competition as possible, and no information respecting the award will be given to any competitor before this publication.

4. Each MS. must have inscribed on it, or otherwise securely attached to it, the name and postal address of the author, together with a declaration *that the work is original and entirely the sender's own*, to be signed by the author and countersigned by some other trustworthy person—*i.e.*, a magistrate, minister of religion, or householder—with the postal address in both cases.

5. The copyright of the prize work, or works, will become the property of the proprietors of this Magazine.

6. Should two MSS. be, in the opinion of the judges, of equal merit, any prizes may be divided between their authors at the discretion of the Editor. Any, or all, of the prizes may be withheld in the event of no MSS. being thought by the judges to be worthy of distinction.

7. All packets containing MSS. should be prepaid. The Editor will not be liable for loss or miscarriage of any work. Unsuccessful competitors may have their MSS. returned to them at their own risk, upon application to the Editor, *after the publication of the award.* Any such application must be made without delay and be accompanied by stamps to defray the cost of carriage. (Competitors should *not* send stamps, or instructions for return, *with their MSS.*, as no notice can be taken of any communications of this nature, made before the award is published.)

8. All MSS. must reach the Editor on or before December 1st, 1892, and should be addressed—The Editor of CASSELL'S MAGAZINE, La Belle Sauvage, London, E.C. Each packet should bear on the top left-hand corner of the envelope or wrapper in which it is enclosed the words, "Six-Part Story Competition."

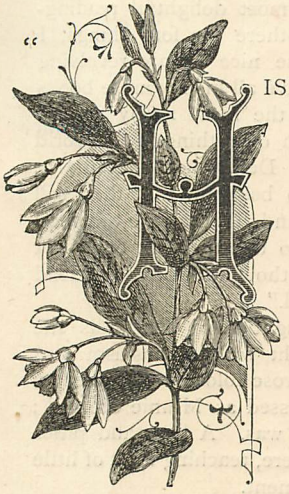
OUR POET.
PAT-A-CAKE AND OTHER POEMS.
PAR-NAS-SUS
AMBROSIA
SWEETIES
TO THE PANTOMIME
JAM-TARTS.
AGED 3 MONTHS.
AGED TWENTY ONE.
AGED 8 YEARS.
POEMS
VOL 2
VOL 3
VOL 4
VOL 5
AGED FORTY.
PRESENT DAY.

UNDECIDED.

(*From a drawing by* SYDNEY COWELL.)

BARBARA MERIVALE.

By ARABELLA M. HOPKINSON, Author of "The Probation of Dorothy Travers," "Vere Thornleigh's Inheritance," "A Woman's Strength," etc. etc.



CHAPTER THE NINTH.

LORD DENZIL'S VISIT.

"HIS Lordship is in the drawing-room, please, ma'am."

Jane made this announcement to Mrs. Merivale one afternoon, some three weeks after the events recorded in the last chapter, much to that lady's satisfaction.

"Thank goodness!" she ejaculated. "Now we shall know what to be about. Barbara," she cried, "Barbara, are you in your room? If so, will you go down to Lord Denzil? He is in the drawing-room. You are a favourite of his," continued the poor woman, conscious that her stepdaughter's fair face, her pretty ways and manners, were more taking than her own; "and you will be able to manage him. But pray don't keep him waiting; you know what an impatient man he is."

"I will go at once," said Barbara, emerging from her bedroom. "Dear mother," she continued gently—their common misfortune had drawn the two women together—"I will do the best I can with Lord Denzil. One thing is, he is very kind-hearted, although he is rough and satirical."

"And, Barbara, remember your father insists on resigning the living. Put it all before Lord Denzil, and see what he says; and whatever you do, don't let your pride stand in your way, for your father's sake."

Barbara smiled. "No, I won't," she said; "although I am a dreadful hand at crying poverty. But indeed I will do all I can; I promise you I will."

"And I think, then, perhaps I had better not appear. Now go, Barbara; pray don't keep him waiting. Stop one minute, though. Don't forget to thank him for all those beautiful things he sent yesterday. Mind you don't; and—well, I have nothing more to say. Go."

Thus adjured, Barbara went downstairs to meet Lord Denzil, feeling that she had a very delicate negotiation to carry through, and praying that she might conduct it to a successful issue. Three weeks had passed away since her father had been found seized with paralysis, and already the household had grown accustomed to an invalid in their midst. Human nature is marvellously plastic; give it a week, and it will grow accustomed to any change, however sad, however shocking. Not that there was anything sad or shocking about Mr. Merivale. On the contrary, very soon his sofa came to be the brightest spot in the overworked, harassed household—the one place where Mrs. Merivale lowered her voice, and smoothed out that frown on her forehead that threatened to become a permanent occupant—the happy playing-ground of the baby, who was not in the least alarmed at the stillness of her guardian—the haven of peace and rest to Barbara. In that quiet nook by the window, looking out on the garden and the church, and across to the blue hills in the distance, the noise and strife of the world seemed to drop off, and only peace and quietness to reign. Here Barbara put from her all thoughts of Richmond, of her daily worries and cares, giving herself up wholly to the entertainment of her father, who was grateful for every attention shown to him, and was equally content to be left for hours, if need be.

Barbara was thinking of this, of that peaceful corner, of the pretty garden, the dear old church, the nice old-fashioned little vicarage, as she entered the drawing-room to tell Lord Denzil that her father considered it his duty to resign it all, seeing that his working days were over. Lord Denzil was standing by the window when she entered the room, drumming impatiently on the panes of glass.

"Well, Miss Barbara?" he said, turning round sharply at the sound of the opening door. "Good gracious!" he continued, "what have you done to yourself? Are you ill? You look like the ghost of your former self!"

"No, I am quite well, thank you," she answered, with that pathetic little smile that had somehow grown habitual to her; "but——"

"Ah, your father, of course. It's a bad business. Tell me, how is he?"

"Much the same, thank you. He can say more than he could at first, and we can understand him better every day. It is his left side that is paralysed, so that he can use his right hand, and could write if he were allowed to. But Doctor Prince will not let him do anything at present, he must be kept so very quiet; and—and—of course, he will never be able to do duty again."

"Is his brain at all affected?"

"Oh, no; we are so thankful for that! It is as clear as ever it was. But, Lord Denzil"—here Barbara leant forward in her chair, and then paused—"he wishes—he wanted to tell you—he says he ought to resign the living." She had brought it out at last, and she held her breath whilst she waited for the answer.

"Why?" Lord Denzil was more than ordinarily curt, and Barbara looked her surprise.

"He can't do anything," she said, "either in church or out of it."

"No, no; of course not, I know that; but why not keep a curate? If he has managed to do the work single-handed, and admirably too, why should not a curate, backed by his advice and his experience, do the same, eh?"

Barbara felt herself getting hot as she recalled her mother's words, "Whatever you do, don't let your pride stand in your way." "A curate," she began, "a curate——" Lord Denzil came to her rescue.

"Will run away with all the emolument from the living, I suppose that is what you mean to say, eh?" he asked. Barbara coloured up.

"Yes," she answered. Lord Denzil smiled.

"You are not a very good ambassadress, Miss Barbara," he said, laughing. "Well, certainly Centrewood does not bring in a princely revenue, so as I am its patron, and am bound to provide for the services in the church—at least, I believe I am—the curate will be my business. Will that do?"

"Oh!" cried Barbara, involuntarily clasping her pretty hands. "How good you are! But, indeed," she continued, forgetting Mrs. Merivale, and only remembering her father's wishes, "that is just what father says, that it is not fair to you to keep on the living, as if he resigned there need be no curate; and he says, too, that it is not right by the parish."

"Tell your father, with my best compliments, that I am quite able to take care of my own interests; and as to the parish, won't it be better off with two people to look after it than one? So there are those two objections disposed of. Has he any more?"

"No, I think not. Oh, Lord Denzil! how can we thank you enough? You are too good!"

"Good? Stuff and nonsense! I am nothing of the kind. I am a very rich man, and I am very sorry for your father. I like him. He is a thoroughly honest man, and does not like begging, even for his parish, any better than you do."

Barbara smiled a pathetic little smile, drawing nearer to Lord Denzil with luminous eyes. "I know you like father," she said simply. "Everyone does who really knows him. I think he is almost a saint," she continued, fighting vigorously with that lump in her throat that was so troublesome. Lord Denzil leant forward.

"Take heart, my little girl," he said kindly. "Saint though he be—and I, for one, believe you—we must try and keep him in this wicked world as long as we can, and so he must have his mind freed from anxiety. People tell me that curates—of course, I mean good ones—are difficult to find nowadays, but your father must not let that worry him. I believe Oliver has got a *rara avis* ready to his hand."

"Has he, really? Ah! that would indeed be a comfort. Is he——"

"I know nothing about him, except that he is a gentleman, and an Oxford man. He is Oliver's friend, and you must ask him all particulars. By the way, I hope he is married, or else he will be falling in love with you; and that would never do, would it? It would be out of the frying-pan into the fire, for curates are proverbially impecunious, and——" Barbara blushed hotly. Lord Denzil's jokes were certainly trying at times.

"Lord Denzil," she broke in desperately, "I have never thanked you from father for all those beautiful things you sent him. They arrived last night, and they will be such a comfort to him."

"Beautiful things! What things? I know nothing of them."

"Let me see; first, there is a bath-chair—oh, such a beauty! and it rolls so easily that I think Charlie or Bob could draw father in it; then there is an expanding chair, or couch, on which he can lie at any angle he chooses, with the most delightful reading-desk attached to it; then—there are four things, I know—oh, yes; one of those nice square revolving bookcases, where he can have all his favourite books close at hand; and lastly, the most lovely invalid writing-case I ever saw, with everything in the world he can want in it. Lady Denzil has one like it. Mother says they are all so beautiful that they will quite smarten up the house, and that they are too good to use; but I mean father to use them at once. It was so wonderfully kind and thoughtful of you to send him just the things he wanted."

How pretty she was, thought Lord Denzil, as she leant forward, her eyes bright with enthusiasm and gratitude, the flickering wild-rose colour in her cheeks; how well she would look dressed as Minnie dressed; how well she looked as she was. A thousand pities she should be buried down here, teaching a lot of little brats to murder a fine instrument.

"But, my dear child," he said, "pray don't keep on ascribing all these virtues to me. I do not deserve it. I am sorry to say I have been neither kind nor thoughtful. I did not send your father all these things. You must thank someone else."

"But who?" cried Barbara, a blissful hope at her heart that it might have been Richmond, although her reason told her it was not. "They came straight from Barter's, with no hint as to who sent them."

"Some of your friends about here, no doubt: the Thorntons or the Miss Sandersons." But Barbara shook her head.

"I don't think so," she said. "It must have been Lady Denzil."

"I should say not," he answered; "but I tell you who I believe it must have been; Oliver. He is a great hand at invalid appliances and inventions. He is always getting the last new thing for his mother. Yes, depend upon it, it was Oliver. Besides which, he always deals at Barter's for those things. If he had come down here to-day in my place, as I wanted him to, you could have asked him about it, but he said he had not the time. Terribly busy man, Oliver, now!" smiling. "But to go back to Lady Denzil: how is it you have never come to pay her a visit in Cadogan Square? She is always wishing you were with her."

Barbara coloured uncomfortably. She could not tell Lord Denzil that Lady Denzil had never asked her to London.

"I cannot get away from home," she said. "I have so many pupils; besides which, I could not leave father now. Please tell me, how is Lady Denzil? Does she like London? and are you all enjoying it?"

Try as she would, she could not mention Richmond's name. Would Lord Denzil understand who "all" meant? Would he tell her what she wanted to know? He made a comical grimace.

"Minnie delights in it, and I like it," he replied; "but her ladyship! Well, you know by this time that she must always have a grumble, poor thing! With her health it is natural, I suppose. No, she does not like London, although when she was down here she was always wanting to be in a city again. Now, London is too much of a city for her; she finds it hot, stuffy, dirty, and a great many other things which are all true, but must be borne with."

"And Miss Denzil enjoys it very much?"

Lord Denzil's face grew grave. "Yes," he answered, "she enjoys it so much that she has enjoyed herself into getting engaged to be married. It is not regularly given out yet, as it was only settled a short time ago, at Ascot; but it is an open secret, and is already, I believe, town talk."

"Oh! I am so glad. I hope you all like it." Barbara was smiling; she was delighted to hear that Minnie was going to be married.

Lord Denzil pursed up his lips. "No," he said bluntly, "I don't like it; but parents' wishes go for very little in these days. The young man is pleasant and amiable—at least, he has always appeared so to me—but he has no money and no profession. His face is his fortune. It is a very charming endowment for a young lady, but one expects something more of a man. However, Minnie vows she will marry him, and no one else, and as she will have money enough for both, I suppose I can't object, particularly as I have been ass enough to give him the run of my house for more than a year."

Barbara gave a little shiver as she heard this last sentence.

"Will they be married soon?" she asked.

"I think not. I have imposed a condition. They are not to be married until Richmond has found something to do; I fancy that will be a work of time. You think me cruel?" observing that Barbara was looking at him with wide-open distended eyes, a strange expression hovering round her white lips.

"No," she answered slowly, "no"; and then she suddenly burst into a laugh, a curious high-pitched laugh, which rang uncomfortably in Lord Denzil's ears; it was unlike herself, he thought. He looked at his watch.

"Bless me!" he exclaimed, "what am I thinking of? It is half-past three, and I promised to meet Holmes at the Croft at a quarter-past. I must be going, and directly too."

With a superhuman effort Barbara pulled herself together.

"I beg your pardon," she said, in a low dull voice, clutching the back of the chair by which she was standing to steady herself. "I am afraid you must think me very rude."

"Not at all," he answered, in a hurry to be off, and looking round the room for his hat. "Somehow it is laughable to think of Richmond as a married man, although Minnie would not like me to say so. However, as his marriage depends upon his finding something to do, I don't think it will take place quite yet awhile. Now I must be off. Tell your father I should have paid him a visit, but that I know he ought to be kept perfectly quiet. And make his mind quite easy about the curate; it will be all right. As to his resignation, say I won't hear of it. Now good-bye; take care of yourself; don't fret about your father; and I hope next time I see you you will have a little more flesh upon your bones, and a little more colour on your cheeks," and off bustled Lord Denzil, to Barbara's infinite relief.

Mechanically she shut the door behind him, and then she stood still to think.

What was it he had said? Minnie going to be married—to Richmond; and she had laughed—why, she wondered, what had she laughed at? She put her hand to her head, for it felt as though it were spinning round. Richmond—yes, she had known it all along—faithless. He had said he loved her—loved her. What was love? Her grey dress—what was it he said about it?—she could not remember. . . . . .

Thus she stood in the middle of the room, propped up against the writing-table, motionless as though turned to stone, muttering little broken sentences to herself. Thus Mrs. Merivale found her when, a few minutes later, she burst into the drawing-room.

"Well, Barbara?" she cried, before she was inside the door. "Well, what did Lord Denzil?—Good gracious! What in the name of wonder has taken the girl?"

The high-pitched trumpeting tones brought Barbara, with a bound, back to her senses. For a second she stared wildly at Mrs. Merivale, and then it all came back to her—her father, the curate, Lord Denzil.

"It is all right, mother," she said, in that same toneless voice in which she had addressed Lord Denzil.

Mrs. Merivale gave a sigh of infinite relief. "Thank God!" she ejaculated; then turning to her stepdaughter. "Sit down, Barbara," she said, forcing her into a chair. "You look quite dazed. What is the matter with you?"

"I don't know," she answered dully.

"You're faint, that's what it is," briskly. "You look it; you're as white as a sheet. You have been overdoing yourself lately with your father, and the agitation of this interview with Lord Denzil has been too much for you. There, lean your head back against the cushion, and tell me, what did he say?"

"What did he say?" a shudder running through her whole frame.

"Yes, yes. Just try and remember, Barbara, that is a good girl. You know what terrible anxiety I am in—and your father too. Does he accept his resignation?"

"No, he won't hear of it; and he says—the curate is to be his——"

But Mrs. Merivale was destined to hear no more. Barbara had fainted away.

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

ANTONY DENZIL'S TOMB.

OLIVER DENZIL had made no excuse when he had alleged to his father that he was too busy to go down to Centrewood; for, in truth, he was very busy.

From morning to night, not one second of his day was unoccupied. He had thrown himself into Parliamentary work with all the earnestness of his earnest nature, and had, as we have mentioned before, at once made his mark in the House of Commons. This, taken with his secretaryship, with the intense practical interest he took in Ireland and all the questions connected with that unhappy country, with all the multifarious duties, political, philanthropic, social, that a public man is called on to perform in these days, left him but little leisure. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that had he, through all these weeks, wished to go to Centrewood, he could have found time to do so over and over again. But, as a matter of fact, he did not wish it. He loved Barbara Merivale with all the force of his nature, and not for one moment had he forgotten her in the work and distractions of town. Mrs. Merivale need not have feared the attractions of the many new and pretty faces that he saw there ; they made no more impression on him than had they been so many Hottentots. He had seen the woman he loved, and Venus herself would not have seduced him from his allegiance. But, at the same time, he knew very well that she did not love him; that she regarded him with a quiet indifference, more difficult to overcome than downright dislike. And yet he meant to win her: that is, if she did not marry someone else in the meantime. For he had taken in clearly enough the flirtation—as he had called it at first—between her and Richmond, and had watched anxiously to see how it would develop itself. If Richmond truly and really loved her, then he would not stand in his way ; but his opinion of his cousin was not a high one, and he doubted if he were capable of loving any woman alive, so unselfishly as to incur poverty and its accompanying obscurity for her sake.

Then had come the hegira to London, and his meeting with Richmond and Barbara, walking so confidentially together down Centrewood market-place on the previous evening, the girl's eyes shining with a happy light, her cheeks glowing not only from wind and rain, but also from some inward fire, and he had said to himself with a sinking heart : "He is a better fellow than I took him for; he has asked her to marry him;" and had gone home to Denzilstone, and surprised his family by eating a very poor dinner.

He had gone to London, expecting every day to hear from Richmond the sequel to that walk from Fairfield, throwing himself into work with fierce energy to try and still the pain at his heart, and schooling himself every time he met his cousin in Cadogan Square, to offer his congratulations with sufficient cordiality on the news he had, no doubt, come to tell.

But he might have spared his pains, for the news never came. Richmond was daily in Cadogan Square, always gay, always cheerful, sufficiently full of high-sounding names and titles, to say nothing of the sayings and doings of royalty, to please republicans—that is to say, Lady Denzil and Minnie—training the latter in all the ins and outs of the London season, engaging the former to act as patroness to this, that, or the other entertainment got up in the much-abused name of Charity ; beguiling the money out of the Denzil pocket with his violet eyes, his smiles and dimples; riding Lord Denzil's horses, eating his dinners and luncheons: in fact, making himself as necessary to the female members of the family in town as he had been at Denzilstone, and conducting himself altogether as though there did not exist, and never had existed, such a person as Barbara Merivale. In the face of such behaviour, Oliver was forced to arrive at one of two conclusions : either Richmond had never proposed to Barbara, but had merely flirted with her to beguile an idle hour—the very thought made him long to kick him out of Cadogan Square—or he was engaged to her, and was keeping the engagement a secret. In either case, he felt that it would be wiser to keep clear of Centrewood for the present. Time would force Richmond to show his hand, and in the meantime, judging by her attitude at Easter, his presence was a matter of such perfect indifference to Barbara, that probably it would be more diplomatic to withdraw it for a while.

And before very long Richmond did show his hand, in a very unexpected manner, by becoming engaged to Minnie, equally to the surprise of Oliver and his father. Strange to say, they had neither of them ever contemplated this result of the intimacy between the cousins. Both had made up their minds that Minnie intended to become an English peeress; and as for Richmond, he was so completely a part and parcel of the household, that he no more entered their calculations as regarded Minnie than if he had been Oliver himself.

"We have both been asses, Oliver," said Lord Denzil to his son, when discussing the matter ; "but we must make the best of it now the deed is done."

"I suppose we must," replied Oliver, conscious that he was not as distressed about the engagement as he ought to have been, considering his opinion of Richmond. "It does, however, occur to one, is Val the man to make Minnie a good husband?"

"Minnie has settled all that for herself," replied his father. "I put before her, and in pretty plain language too, that she was going to marry a loafer ; she only smiled at my ignorance, and assured me that Val was the busiest man she knew. He gets up bazaars, fancy fairs, balls, and I don't know what besides, and purveys men for the same ; in fact, he is very much like an advertisement on a confectioner's circular, and might, with profit, join forces with a 'general provider.' At the same time she informed me that she had made up her mind to marry him, and no one else, so there you have it. She is two-and-twenty; she has seen the world, and plenty of other men, who have wanted to marry her, and she has deliberately chosen Richmond; and what can I say, considering that for the last year I have allowed him the run of my house? However, the condition I have imposed will show what stuff he is made of, and I hope it will all turn out well. He is cheerful and pleasant, and very harmless."

"Ahem !" said Oliver, the recollection of Barbara's shining eyes and glowing cheeks rising up before him. "I am not so sure of his harmlessness ; I only hope he has enough principle to be a good husband."

"Come, Oliver, you are hard on him. The truth is, you don't like the engagement any better than I do," said Lord Denzil, unaware that at that moment his son's imagination was rioting in the fact that Barbara was now within his reach, and might one day be his.

"As far as Minnie is concerned, I don't," he answered; and with that the conversation ended, the two men parting, each to go his way.

As Oliver walked through the crowded streets towards his rooms in Jermyn Street, his feelings were very mixed, but as, alas! in our poor human nature—even in its best specimens—self does and will predominate at times, so was the regret that Minnie should marry a man whom he certainly would not have chosen for her, submerged in the fact that Barbara was thereby freed from Richmond and his fascinations, and at liberty to marry him.

He was fond of his sister, and would have been fonder had she allowed him; but she was cold, self-absorbed, unsympathetic, singularly uninfluenced by affection, with tastes few in number, and diametrically opposed to his, and with all the obstinacy of a narrow mind, that would, as Lord Denzil had said, have its way at any cost.

"'NOW I MUST BE OFF'" (*p.* 515).

Thus it was that after the first annoyance at her choice, Oliver's thoughts quickly reverted to Barbara. Could he, with his plain face, his American accent—for he did not spare himself—hope to succeed to that Apollo-like creature, Val, in her affections? and yet there was that in her, he felt sure, that might be captivated by other qualifications than blue eyes, a ready tongue, and a winning smile. "She must love me in time," he half murmured to himself, "because I love her so." It was rather a simple argument for a man past thirty, but a true one, nevertheless, when coupled with a will to enforce it. Yet, as he tied his white tie to go out to dinner that night, he surveyed his own irregular features with grim dissatisfaction. "What an ugly brute you are!" he murmured to himself, as he descended the staircase; "but ugly or not, you must win her, even if it be ten years hence;" and with that he retraced his steps to settle his train for Centrewood the following Saturday, ostensibly to discuss with Mr. Merivale the question of his friend Mr. Bramley becoming his curate, in reality to see Barbara.

It was a very washed-out, large-eyed, altered Barbara he was to see.

A week had gone by since she had heard of Richmond's engagement, and it had been a week of keen suffering to her. She had come back to life, after her fainting-fit in the drawing-room, to find it altogether changed for her. She had been cruelly wounded in all that was dear to her: in her love, in her faith, above all, in her pride; her whole being was tingling with the pain and the smart of it, whilst her pride told her to put on a brave and smiling face, to look as though she did not care; nay, bade her go further still, and tell herself she did not care. Even in the darkness and silence of the night, with no eye to see her, with no sound to disturb her but that of baby's soft breathing in her cot beside her bed, she would carry on the

battle, fighting desperately against the relief of tears, against the voiceless lament, "And I loved him so!" that would rise up in her heart, bringing the crimson tide into her cheeks, that she should so have cared for one who had asked for and taken her love, and then thrown it aside like a withered flower. And then, womanlike, she would excuse him, laying the blame on Miss Denzil. "She beguiled him," she would say, never giving a thought to Minnie's money, until, at times, she almost persuaded herself that Richmond was a victim, not seeing that the part of an unwilling victim is not quite the noblest or the most manly for a young vigorous man, in possession of all his senses, to play.

Only in her father's room, when he was stroking her pretty hair, and asking why she looked so white and thin, and what ailed her, was she tempted to lay aside her mask, longing with an almost intolerable longing that she were once more a child, and might lay her head upon his knee, and tell him her pain. But that was only for a few seconds. Another minute, and she would be smiling up into his face, asserting that she was quite well, and that it was only the heat that tried her; she never had been able to stand the heat. She was determined, come what might, not to wear the willow. But it was very hard to keep up this outward cheerfulness when within all was so dark and dreary: harder still to fight against the wretched listlessness that possessed her, the feeling that she cared for nothing, that everything had lost its interest, and to wear a smiling countenance to the world when she would far rather have turned her face to the wall, and have shut it out; but hardest of all to hear Mrs. Merivale discussing Richmond's engagement with everyone that came to the house, saying the same thing over and over again as to how she had always foreseen it, and to sit by with an unmoved countenance, and assent to the platitudes uttered on the subject by the worthy inhabitants of Centrewood.

No wonder that she shivered with apprehension as to what was in store for her, when, returning rather late one morning from giving her lessons, she espied through the dining-room window Mr. Denzil seated between Charlie and Jack, tranquilly partaking of the Vicarage early dinner. Her heart sank within her as she observed her stepmother's animated countenance and eager voice; she wondered how long he had been there, and whether, perhaps, they might not have had time to say all there was to say about Miss Denzil's engagement? How willingly would she have foregone dinner altogether—she was never hungry now—and have fled to the shelter of her father's sofa; but, alas! Mr. Denzil had seen her, had smiled at her through the window; there was no escape: she must face the ordeal as best she might. So, with a set smile on her lips, she turned the latch and entered the room.

"Barbara, my dear," almost before she was in the room, "here is Mr. Denzil," cried Mrs. Merivale, to whom just at this moment her stepdaughter was a most important person. Had not Mr. Denzil kept his eyes persistently fixed on the window ever since he had sat down to table? and had she not surprised a smile on his countenance, for which she could then and there have blessed him, the moment Barbara's hat came into sight?

"How do you do, Mr. Denzil?" said Barbara, as she drew off her gloves, and seated herself at the bottom of the table. "I am so sorry to be so late, mother," she continued; "but Mrs. Nettlefold kept me a long time, whilst she wrote a note for me to leave at the Thorntons'."

"My dear, it does not signify; I am only afraid your dinner may be cold," replied Mrs. Merivale, all smiles with the vision of Barbara reigning at Denzilstone: a vision so glorious that it took her breath away even to contemplate it, and made her wonder that the girl could be so cool, not to say indifferent, to this delightful young man, who was to be the instrument to raise her to this position. "Are you not delighted that Mr. Denzil has stayed to dinner?" she continued, anxious to kindle some enthusiasm in her stepdaughter's bosom.

"Yes; it is very nice," answered Barbara indifferently, occupying herself with severing a bone for Jack.

"Though I tell him," continued Mrs. Merivale, "that we have but humble fare, very different to——"

"Mr. Denzil," interrupted Barbara, for the first time looking at him, and smiling faintly, "knows pretty well how we live, don't you, Mr. Denzil? and what he must expect if he lunches here."

"I know that I expect, and I get, a very nice luncheon, for which I am very grateful to Mrs. Merivale," answered Oliver, quite surprised at his own pretty speech, for he was not, as a rule, fluent in that line.

Mrs. Merivale smiled ecstatically. "It is not *our* luncheon, you know, Mr. Denzil; we make it our dinner," she said. "We cannot attempt to go in for late dinners. In a clergyman's household there is always so much evening work; besides, with only one servant——"

Barbara groaned inwardly. How long, she wondered, now she was once launched, would Mrs. Merivale descant to Mr. Denzil on the ins and outs of the Vicarage; yet, after all, what did it matter? Better that than Richmond's engagement.

"With one servant," continued Mrs. Merivale, now in full swing on a very favourite topic, "it is an impossibility, besides being a greater extravagance than we can really afford. Jane is a very good, strong girl—she came from Ditchworth, you know—but she is nothing of a cook, and is as likely as not to spoil anything she puts her hand to; therefore I have myself to go into the kitchen and see to things, and——" But here Barbara's patience, in spite of that horrible apathy that had come over her since Lord Denzil's visit, gave way.

"Mr. Denzil," she asked, gently interrupting Mrs. Merivale's disclosures, "have you seen father?" Oliver turned to her with alacrity. He was not interested in Mrs. Merivale's domestic arrangements.

"Yes, indeed," he answered. "I came down here on purpose to see him, and I have been sitting with him for more than half-an-hour, telling him all about

my friend Mr. Bramley." At last a look of interest, a light in those tired lack-lustre eyes! Barbara's heart was smiting her with remorse, to think that she should have forgotten what was so important to her father, to them all. How selfish she was!

"How kind of you," she said, "when you are so busy. Do you think Mr. Bramley will come to us? Father is so pleased at the idea of him."

"He is most desirous to come," he answered; "and as he seems the very man to suit Mr. Merivale and Centrewood, one may conclude that the business is practically settled."

"Yes," interrupted Mrs. Merivale, who never liked to be kept long out of a conversation, "he really does seem made for us. He has been working for love—so he has private means, which is very fortunate—in South London for twelve years, and is ordered now by his doctors to live in the country. And only think, Barbara, he is to be married the week after next, and Mr. Denzil is going to the wedding. It is a great relief to my mind. I do not like an unmarried curate."

Barbara smiled. "How very interesting!" she said. "I hope his future wife is nice. Who is she, Mr. Denzil?"

"A Miss Chalmers; she comes from Gloucestershire. Yes, she is very nice, young, and rather pretty. I think you will like her."

"Oh, I am sure we shall," answered Mrs. Merivale briskly. "I am prepared to do so on your word, Mr. Denzil. I am most anxious to see Mr. Bramley. He is to come down here," turning to Barbara, "next Saturday, and to take the Sunday duty for your father. Mr. Denzil has been most kind in arranging everything."

"Yes, I am sure he has," answered Barbara, looking at him gratefully, and thinking what a delightful turn the conversation had taken, miles away from Richmond and Minnie. But her self-congratulation was premature.

"Talking of weddings," struck in Mrs. Merivale at this point: "you have never congratulated Mr. Denzil, Barbara, on his sister's engagement."

Mr. Denzil laughed. "Mrs. Merivale," he said, "you and I quite threshed out that interesting subject an hour ago. Altogether, I have heard so much of it lately that I shall be grateful to Miss Barbara if she will not congratulate me."

"Oh, fie, Mr. Denzil! I never heard such a thing. Now, an engagement is always an interesting topic to me, and this one particularly so, for I foresaw it from the first."

"Then," said Oliver abruptly, "you were much cleverer than either my father or I, for it took us both by surprise. Miss Merivale," he continued, bending a little forward, and addressing Barbara, who was busying herself with baby's pudding, "if you are not too tired after your lessons, I am going to ask you a favour."

"No, I am not at all tired," she answered, looking up from her occupation, and smiling brightly—aggressively brightly.

"You look very tired," he could not help answering, unable to refrain from some notice of her thin white face, the dark marks round her eyes.

"My looks belie me," she responded, almost defiantly, "they always do in hot weather. No," she went on hurriedly; "I had quite an easy time this morning. The Nettlefolds are some of my favourite pupils; they have so much real talent; it's the stupid ones that tire me. I wonder why there are so many stupid people in the world?"

"To teach patience to the wiser ones, I conclude," said Oliver.

"Or impatience," she returned. "You teach me impatience, don't you, Jack," she added, more for something to say than for any other reason, addressing her youngest brother, who was stolidly working through a helping of remarkably stodgy suet pudding.

"You're not so impatient as you used to be, Bab," he answered sententiously. "I told father yesterday you were very much improved."

"Thanks so much, dear. I shall hold my head two or three pegs higher now," she answered; but although she smiled, there was no mirth in her voice. "What is the favour, Mr. Denzil?" she continued more softly—this man had been, oh, so good to her father! "I shall be only too pleased to do anything I can."

"I want you to go to the church with me," he answered, "and to draw me just an outline sketch of Antony Denzil's tomb. Should you mind?" he added. "I have a friend who is much interested in those things. I shall meet him on Monday, and I should like to show it to him. I am just now rather going in for archæology, for, like most Americans, I am very ignorant of it, the result of living in a new country."

"Oh, yes! I will certainly come," she answered; "but——"

"Nonsense, Barbara, there is no 'but,'" interposed Mrs. Merivale; "you go with Mr. Denzil."

"What is the 'but,' Miss Barbara?"

"Only that on Saturdays I usually get a clear hour or so after dinner, which I always spend with father. But of course it does not signify."

"I don't think Mr. Merivale will mind your spending it with Antony Denzil to-day, do you?" he asked, with the faintest possible tinge of authority in his tone, which was a novelty to Barbara.

"I am sure he will not," she said. "I will go and get my drawing things at once."

Ten minutes later Mrs. Merivale was watching her and Mr. Denzil, as they walked down the street together, a broad smile, which made her look positively young, illuminating her plain features.

"He will find all the boys professions," thought the poor soul to herself, as she actually ran upstairs to her husband, to whom, however, she was careful not to impart her suspicions, he was so unworldly; ten to one he might disapprove, she said, quite unaware that Mr. Merivale had guessed Oliver's secret that very morning, and, unworldly as he was, was rejoicing that his little Barbara, his dainty, pretty Barbara, should have found so true a man to love her, and one who could lift her from the straits of poverty to a sphere suitable to her.

For in Mr. Merivale's eyes nothing was too good for Barbara—the living image of the Barbara Grey whom he had wooed, and won, and lost, when life was still life to him.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

UNDER THE QUEEN'S OAK.

ANTONY DENZIL'S was a very perfect and beautiful specimen of an Elizabethan monument, that had been spared by the Roundheads, for the admirable reason that they had not penetrated to Centrewood. Therefore his thin, curved, aristocratic nose, his idealised marble fingers, his wrought lace ruff, were all quite whole, and had been the objects of Barbara's tender attentions ever since she had first made their acquaintance. Many and many a time had she taken her pocket-handkerchief to brush away any dust that lingered in the crevices of the handsome features or between the tapered fingers, and Mr. Denzil could hardly have set her a task more to her liking than that of transferring them to paper.

"I am afraid I shall make a very poor thing of it, Mr. Denzil," she said, as they walked up the church path, "but I will do the best I can."

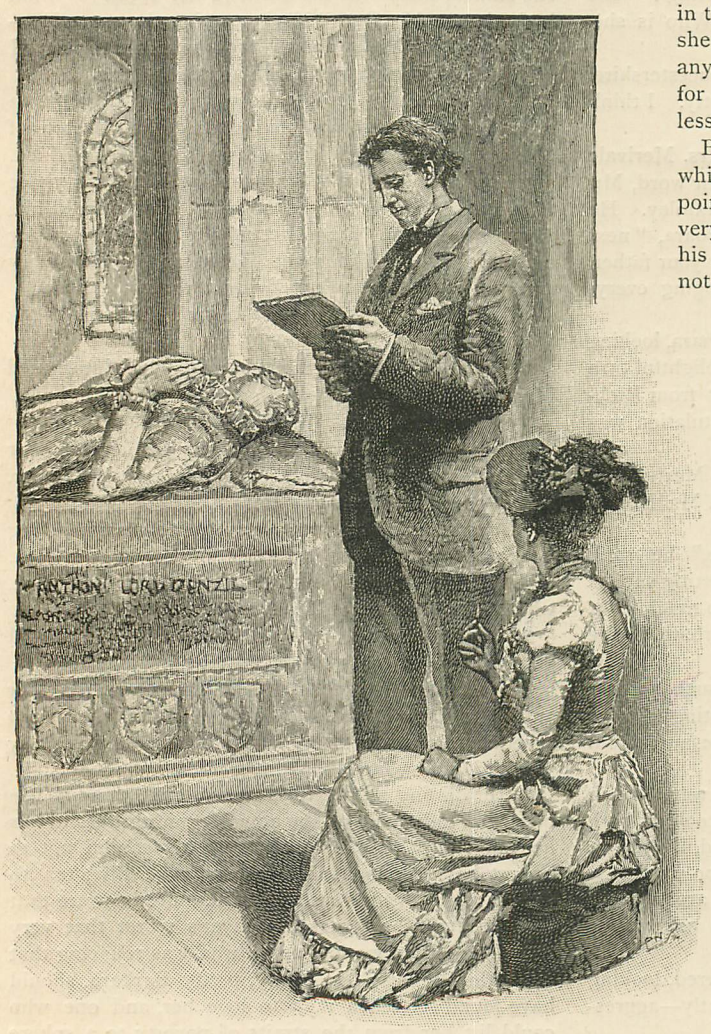
They had not said much to each other hitherto, beyond exchanging one or two remarks about nothing in particular. The church stood but a few hundred yards from the vicarage, and Oliver had been occupied in holding a huge umbrella over Barbara to protect her from the July sun, and in contemplating her altered looks, which, to his mind, made her more beautiful than ever, although it went to his heart to see the change.

"It is only an outline I want," he said, "and I am quite sure you can do that. Curiously enough, there is not a photograph of it left in the village. Jones tells me there is so little demand for them that no fresh one has been taken for a long time. Do you know," he continued, "I think I am a brute for taking you out in this sun?"

"I don't mind the sun," she answered; and, in truth, she was in that frame of mind that she was indifferent to everything. "Besides, anyhow, I should have had to go out in it, for I am due at the Murrays' for Evelyn's lesson at a quarter to four."

By this time they were at the church, which was open, as it always was—it was a point on which Mr. Merivale had insisted very strongly, against much opposition, from his very arrival at Centrewood. He could not bear to think that any poor, weary, sad, or wicked soul should try that door in vain; therefore from early morning till evening, unguarded and unwatched, the old Norman church opened her portals, inviting into her deep cool shadows many a sore heart, to send it away again calmed and strengthened. How often, during these past months, had Barbara crept in like some wounded bird, to kneel down for a brief space in some dim corner, and to come away again strangely comforted and refreshed. But that was before she knew for a fact that Richmond was faithless, whilst she was still hoping and praying that he might come back to her. But since Lord Denzil's visit she had shunned her corner in the church; her heart was so sore, so bitter, her faith in everything seemed shaken: she had been deceived, played with, cast aside like an old glove; her whole being was in revolt; how could she pray?

But to-day, as she passed through the doorway, for the first time since last Sunday, out of the glare of the sunshine into the dim cool building,



"HE GAZED AT IT FIXEDLY FOR A MINUTE" (*p.* 521).

the beauty of it, and the suggestiveness of its beauty, fell upon her like water on a thirsty land, and she turned to Oliver.

"It's such a dear old church, isn't it?" she said.

"Beautiful," he answered. "We have nothing, you know, like this in America."

"No, I suppose not," she said. "What a void it must be!—like living on a hill with no trees round you, with the broad glare of the present day flooding everything, and none of the shadows of the past to help build up the present. I shouldn't like it; but then," she added apologetically, "I am rather crazy about everything old."

"Then you don't mind sketching Antony?"

"Oh no! I am so fond of him!"

They had reached the tomb by this time, and Barbara had got out her drawing materials, and had seated herself in a convenient position, facing Oliver, who, on the other side, the better to see her sweet face, to watch her quick clever fingers at work, was preparing to make a few notes of the various arms, quarterings, and heraldic devices scattered broadcast over the tomb, and generally over the chapel. For a long time they worked on without speaking. Barbara, interested in her occupation, but more so in her own thoughts, only too glad of the tacit excuse for silence afforded by the fact of being in church, made no attempt at conversation; whilst Oliver, under the pretence, more or less real, of his notes, was quite content to respect her silence, seeing that he might gaze at her without let or hindrance, registering a vow there, in the presence of the dust of his ancestors, that she, and no other, should be his wife. Suddenly she looked up from the contemplation of Antony's high-bred profile to encounter Oliver's plain countenance opposite to her, and the thought struck her that the race of Denzil had not improved since it emigrated to the other side of the Atlantic—at least, as far as the outer man was concerned. To her confusion, Oliver apparently guessed what she was thinking of.

"Marble has a very refining effect," he said; "but he must always have been a very good-looking fellow, this ancestor of ours, though a rare scamp."

"Was he?" asked Barbara. "I did not know that."

"I have only discovered it of late. I have been burrowing amongst family papers and the records of that time to find out all I can of my forbears, and I am sorry to say Antony does not come out of the investigation with very clean hands."

"Oh, I am sorry! What did he do?"

"Played fast and loose with Mary and Elizabeth, with Philip of Spain and Burleigh—a traitor!" answered Oliver laconically.

"Oh, the wretch!" cried Barbara; "and with that face, too!" and then suddenly there flashed across her memory Richmond's oval face and Greek profile, his radiant god-like beauty, and she coloured.

"Look, Mr. Denzil," she said hurriedly, handing him the drawing; "will this do? for I must be going now, or I shall be late at the Murrays'."

He gazed at it fixedly for a minute. "Couldn't be better," he said, with a smile that Barbara did not see, being busied with putting up her drawing materials: a slightly fatuous smile, inspired by the paper she had just touched, the lines she had drawn. "May I keep it? I have a pocket which will just take it in without creasing it. I'm so much obliged to you."

"Oh, indeed!" she said, "it is nothing. I wish I had had time to do it better," she added, as they emerged once more into the broad sunlight. "But I am afraid I must say good-bye now, and be off;" and she laid her hand upon her violin-case that she had left in the porch.

But Oliver was beforehand with her. "Do you think?" he said, "that I am going to let you carry this to the Murrays' through this sun?"

"Oh, but indeed I can. I do it constantly, and think nothing of it. I dare say you would let me go through the woods—that is, if you have the key of the church gate with you—and they would be shady."

"Yes, I have the key, and you shall go through the woods; but you must put up with my company, too. I am not going to let you carry this one yard to-day."

She smiled faintly. "You are so kind," she protested, but she had not the energy to combat the kindness, for she was beginning to feel that there lay a pretty strong will behind it, and that if he intended to carry her fiddle, carry it he would, in spite of any amount of protestations; besides—her usual argument at this time—what did it matter? What did anything matter?

So Oliver carried the violin, and Barbara walked beside him, the word "Traitor," applied to Antony Denzil, sticking to her memory like a burr. Traitor! untrue! unfaithful! and with it, the vision of Richmond bending his head down to hers, and whispering that he loved her, had always loved her. But he had loved Minnie's money better; for by this time the current gossip on the subject had enlightened her as to the possible motive of his desertion.

Traitor! The word had acted as a match to tinder. If she might only show him that she did not care—not one straw—if she might be able to meet him with her head held high, congratulate him with an unflinching voice, that he might never, never guess how that she had given him her whole heart.

"Do you know, I am very sorry I have destroyed your faith in Antony Denzil?"

Barbara started out of her reverie. It really was very strange how Mr. Denzil seemed to be able to read her thoughts. She laughed. It was a cheerless little laugh, but she did not know that.

"Don't be sorry," she said. "It is a very good thing to get rid of one's illusions."

"I don't know that," he answered. "It may be a good thing, but sometimes it is very unpleasant."

"Oh, yes," she replied, "unpleasant enough, but salutary—I suppose like taking medicine or getting up early; and, after all, it is better to know the truth than to live in a fool's paradise, where all the geese are swans. Antony Denzil, for instance," she added, fearful lest she had spoken too strongly, and betrayed

the bitterness she felt. Oliver smiled rather sadly. Was this the fresh, simple, happy Barbara, whom his mother had compared to a sunbeam, because of her delightful capacity for enjoying herself—this girl who was beginning so early to distinguish between geese and swans.

"Don't be in a hurry to quit your fool's paradise," he said gently. "You may be forced out of it quite soon enough, without opening the door for yourself."

It was on the tip of her tongue to say: "I have been forced out of it already;" instead of which, she fell back on that unfailing resource, the weather.

"How stifling it is here," she remarked; "it feels like thunder."

"It is thunder, I am afraid," he answered. "I was just thinking we are going to have a storm. It has come up uncommonly quickly."

"Then I must hurry," she said, "and get to the Murrays' before it breaks. Ah!" as a great drop splashed upon her face, "it has begun already."

"Yes. I had no idea it was so close upon us. Let us make for the Queen's Oak. When it does come down, it will be in torrents. We have no time to lose; I am afraid you must run." He was thinking of how lightly she was clad, in her thin cotton dress. If she did not get under shelter she would be wet to the skin in five minutes.

"I don't mind running," she answered, remembering how Richmond had compared her to Atalanta; "and we are very close."

But when they reached the welcome shelter of the Queen's Oak, she was struggling for breath, and changing colour from red to white in a manner truly terrifying to her inexperienced companion. In a moment he had thrown to the winds all his resolutions of prudence, of biding his time, as he put out his arm to support her.

"Lean against me, darling," he said, trying to draw her close to him, but she sprang from his side with frightened eyes.

"I am only out of breath—I ran so fast—I shall be all right directly," she gasped, putting a good yard or two between them.

But Oliver's flood-gates were open now; he was no more to be restrained than the rain, which was coming down like a torrent, splashing through the thick foliage of the Queen's Oak, and falling in great heavy drops on him and Barbara. He was by her side again in a second, his coat off.

"Don't run away from me, Barbara," he said; and before she knew well what he was doing, he had put his coat round her shoulders, had placed her against the trunk of the tree, and himself in such a position as best to shield her from the rain.

"You must let me do it for you, dearest," he said, as she tried to resist, "because I love you so."

There was no question but that he spoke the truth. You had only to look at him to see that. The whole man was transformed by the long-pent-up love, that shone now unrestrained out of every feature. To Barbara's excited imagination, dazed and bewildered by the sudden unexpected revelation, he seemed bigger, taller than before, as he stood in front of her, dominating her by the force of his passion.

"I love you, Barbara!" he said—and the words seemed red hot, as from a furnace—"as I have never loved any woman before; you are my life; for you there is nothing I would not do or dare. I have loved you from the first moment I saw you. I shall love you—always—always! Barbara, my love, my precious love, will you be my wife?"

Afar the thunder was rolling and growling, outside the spreading branches of the oak-tree the rain was coming down like a curtain, shutting them in as in a tent. Barbara was no longer struggling and gasping for breath, that had passed off very quickly. White, transfixed, with large eyes, half of fear, half of wonder, she heard Oliver speaking almost the same words, yet somehow so different, that Richmond had spoken a few months ago. Mechanically she set the two side by side, the false and the true, hearing the one through the other, and then there leapt up into her heart a sudden triumphant joy. Here, then, was the way of escape. This was how she could show Richmond how he was nothing, nothing in the world to her, that as he had played with her, so she had taken it as play, and nothing more; here was the weapon which would enable her to meet him with head erect and a smiling face, perhaps even to congratulate him, which must expunge from his memory that terrible confession he had forced from her that she loved him; as Oliver's affianced wife, she could face him and Minnie, and——

"Tell me, darling, you will be my wife?"

Oliver's voice broke in upon her imaginations, bringing her back with a bound to the present. She shivered a little as she heard it, but that might have been from the damp. He was standing close to her, looking at her with eyes that frightened her—they seemed to ask for so much more than she could give—his hand stretched out towards her, waiting for her answer—the answer that was to bring balm to her wounded pride, to her mortified affections. And yet her tongue refused to give it. With drooping head and averted eyes, she stood silent and motionless, unable to bring out one little monosyllable.

"Barbara, my dearest"—he was speaking with an earnestness, which was almost entreaty—"will you not answer? Look into my face, love, that shall be your answer."

But her head sank lower and lower; the triumph over Richmond was being dearly bought, yet bought it must be. With a supreme effort she suddenly raised her eyes, and looked him in the face.

"Yes," she murmured, under her breath, so faintly that only Oliver, with all his senses on the alert, could have heard her. Then once more her head sank as she turned away her eyes, unable to face the wild delight written on his usually calm features, the mad rapture with which he was contemplating her. For, alas! there was no delight in her heart; on the contrary, with the utterance of that "Yes" a kind of dull despair had settled down on it; she was conscious of nothing else but an insane desire to escape, to get

"SHE WAS STRUGGLING FOR BREATH" (*p.* 522).

away—only to get away. But how to do it when he was standing there close beside her, pouring forth all his happiness, repeating again and again how he loved her, trying to compel her to look at him. Oh, if he would but go! Instead of which, his arm was closing round her waist; he was drawing her nearer and nearer to himself. With a cry of dismay and terror she broke loose from him.

"Oh, don't, don't!" she cried.

That cry sobered Oliver. There was silence for a second, whilst Barbara edged away further and further from him, casting at him furtive glances of appeal; then he approached her again. All the tumultuous happiness had died out of his countenance, he was once more his quiet calm self, whilst, round his mouth there lingered a trace of the pain that had flashed into his face the second before.

"I beg your pardon, my dearest, I forgot myself," he said so gently, so tenderly, that Barbara's heart smote her. "I frightened you, my little sweet love. Will you forgive me?"

"Oh yes, yes," she said hurriedly. "It is I who ought to ask your forgiveness," colouring scarlet; then suddenly perceiving that the rain had ceased, and the sun was making an effort to come out, "Look," she cried, trying to suppress the unmistakable relief she felt, "it is quite fine; the sun is shining. I must be going, indeed I must, Mr. Denzil. I shall be so late at the Murrays', and Mrs. Murray will not like it. Please, please, let me go."

The tone of wistful entreaty went to his heart. After all, he had won a very barren victory, if victory you could call a mere surrender.

"Does Mrs. Murray show she does not like it if you are a few minutes late?" he asked.

"Oh yes!" brightening a little at getting on to an

every-day topic. "She is not a person, you know, to conceal her feelings."

Oliver's lips tightened rather ominously. "Darling," he said, "will you tell her that to-day's will be your last lesson to Miss Murray?"

"Oh no!" she cried, again half frightened, "oh no! I cannot be in such a hurry. Evelyn must finish her course. And now I really must go. Please give me my fiddle, Mr. Denzil?"

"That means you want me to go. So I will, darling, since you wish it. But tell me, first, when shall I see you again—to-day? When shall I come to see your father?" She turned quite pale.

"Oh, not to-day; please not to-day!" she cried. "Give me a little time."

"To-morrow, then," he answered; "not later than to-morrow, Barbara. And mayn't I see you again to-day, dearest?"

"Won't you wait till to-morrow altogether?" she pleaded. "I have always so much to do Saturday evenings," she added apologetically.

"If you wish it, dear," he said very gently.

"You are so good," she cried penitently. He shook his head and smiled.

"No," he said, "I am not good. It is only that I love you. Good-bye, my dear, beautiful love!"

He took her hand in his, gazing wistfully into her face. But she shrank just a little away, and he let it go again as he gave her her fiddle.

Then he stood and watched her until she was out of sight: her lithe upright figure, stooping a little this afternoon, her small deer-like head, the masses of her golden hair gleaming in the sunshine.

"She does not love me an iota," he murmured to himself; "and no other woman would I marry on such terms. But to win her"—and his face glowed at the bare thought—"I would sink every vestige of pride I possess; and when once she is mine, and I have her all to myself, once she really learns to know me, she must love me, because I love her so."

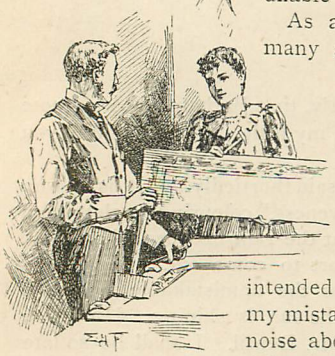
He lingered there another half-hour, getting as close to the house as he could without making himself visible, and listening if he might catch the sound of *her* fiddle through the open windows. It came at last in a slow wailing nocturne that sounded like Chopin. The clear notes, full of vague pain, floated out to him on the breeze, and he turned to go away.

"I cannot stand that," he muttered to himself. "If she is unhappy——"

At that minute the Murrays' stable-clock rang out five, and he quickened his steps, for he was engaged to meet Mr. Holmes at Denzilstone at five. A moment later, and the nocturne had changed to a strain of wild jubilant triumph, and he smiled as he heard it. "Sweet darling!" he exclaimed, "she will, she must be happy with me, because——" then he laughed aloud. "I am growing idiotic, I think, for I keep on saying the same thing. Ah! there is Holmes. Perhaps an hour with him will restore me to sanity."

END OF CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

MY WOOD-CARVING EXPERIENCES.



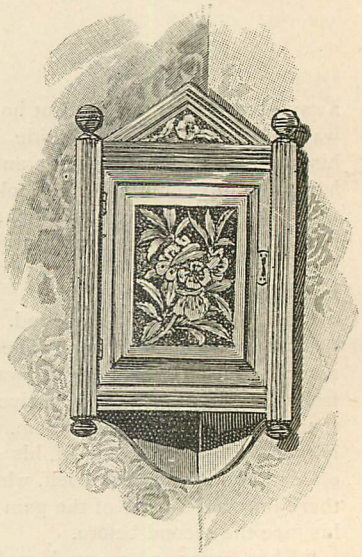
IT is a dreadful thing to be a man of ambitions if you are unable to carry them out.

As a young fellow, I had many ambitions, and I was not quiet about them, either. I took all the world into my confidence: they all knew what I was going to do—the sort of wife I meant to marry and the kind of house I intended to live in. That was my mistake—I made too much noise about the thing. It was difficult to draw back or hold my head high when I had to do exactly the opposite.

Of course, about my wife I did not much mind. She was as different from the heroine of my dreams as one woman could be from another: she was not even beautiful: and as for being clinging and helpless and delicate, and having no way but mine: why, she would have laughed at the idea! However, when all is said, she was the woman I loved and who made me happy, so I did not care what the fellows said about my old ideal, who probably would have been a fool, and most aggravating to live with.

But my house was a different matter. How often I had held forth about it, criticising what I called the "Philistine" furniture of my friends, and calling upon them to keep their eyes open for the time when I set up for myself! My house should not be like my next door neighbour's.

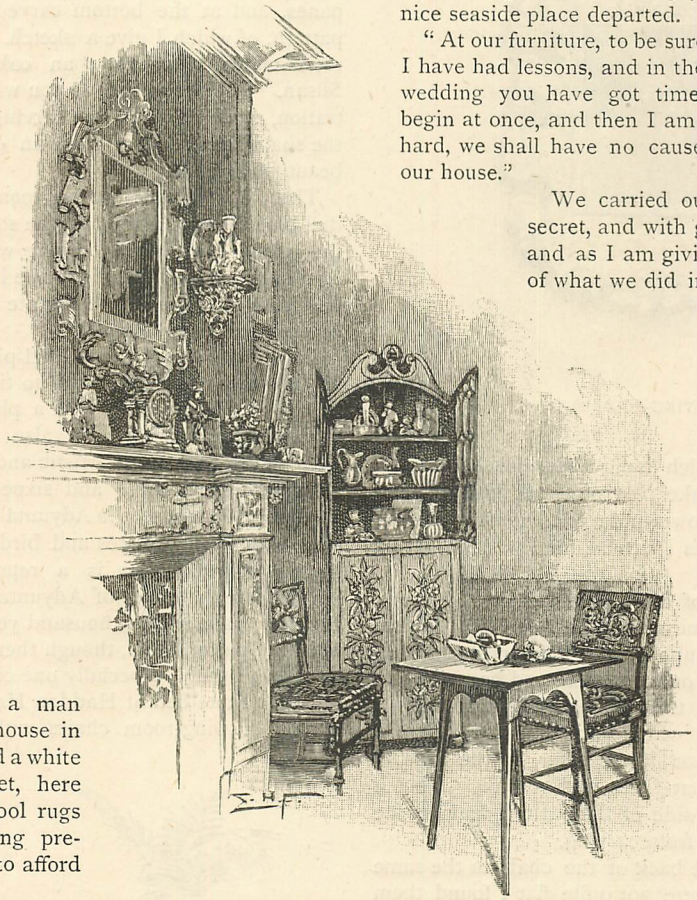
And now here I



KEY CUPBOARD.

was, going to be married, and they were waiting to see; and because Susan had not the fortune of my ideal, and because I had had to save every penny before I could afford to marry at all, I had omitted to take those delightful trips into the far East from which I had intended to bring back so much; and therefore, in spite of careful saving and as much self-denial as I was capable of, I had only just enough money to furnish my house with the most matter-of-fact conventional furniture, which would bear upon its every point the stamp of cheapness.

This really troubled me, though I was ashamed of caring till I made a discovery. Susan cared too — she cared very much more even than I did. She, also, was a woman of ambitions, and she confessed to me that she had constantly said that no power on earth — no wild horse, in fact— should ever induce her to marry a man who furnished his house in "suites," or possessed a white wool rug! And yet, here were we with two wool rugs given us for wedding presents, and only able to afford cheap "suites."



A CORNER OF THE DRAWING-ROOM.

We looked at each other in silence. It was a consolation to know that we both felt it so acutely, and that Susan had decreed that a wool rug should not part us, even though it had a blue and red lion upon it!

I was silent, but Susan settled it, and I felt thankful at that moment that she was a woman with ideas.

"You said, you poor old boy, that you intended going away for six weeks for our wedding tour. I asked you if it was to be abroad, and you said we could not afford that, but that you thought some sea-side place in England would be nice. I did not like to differ from you at the time, because it seemed so uncivil, but my heart failed me from fear. The sad sea-waves in the winter!—a deserted sea-side resort for six weeks! Do you think it is giving any two people a fair chance? Who could stand it—least of all, you and I? Now look here, Jack—do not let us have any tour at all; we should spend a lot of money, and get very little good. Here, in London, where we can do anything, let us just go for a drive after we are married, and then creep into our house, have an old woman to do for us, and let us keep up the shutters in the front and work all day, and dine out every evening at a restaurant. It will be such fun!"

"But what are we to work at?" I asked, while my heart gave a throb of joy as the vision of that nice seaside place departed.

"At our furniture, to be sure. It shall be carved. I have had lessons, and in the six weeks before our wedding you have got time to learn. Now, do begin at once, and then I am sure, if we both work hard, we shall have no cause to feel ashamed of our house."

We carried out this programme in secret, and with great joy to ourselves; and as I am giving this little account of what we did in the hopes of getting more people to take up wood-carving, I will try to give a precise account of what we made.

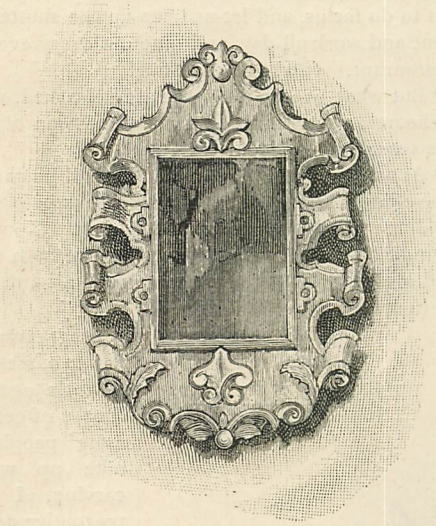
First of all, I was warned not to begin as an amateur. I was told that if I went for my lessons to a carver used to teach amateurs, I should find myself involved in a countless number of tools—fine instruments, that would snap off in my hands if I leaned at all heavily on them, and which would cost money to renew.

So I went to a working carver, and asked him to get me tools like his own. He said I should not require many at first, and he got me seven at tenpence each. He also got me a wooden clump, and two little clamps at sixpence each with which to fasten my wood to the bench; also a little cut nail, at sixpence, with which to stamp my backgrounds.

He began by showing me how to draw or trace the pattern on the wood, and strongly advised me never to glue on a paper pattern and cut round it—as so many do—as this blunts the tools.

I spent a long time in practising how to cut on plain pieces of wood, and I found that when once I had mastered that I had taken my first step in wood-carving. There was a long road between this and my first

panel, and I spoiled that first panel by cutting too deep, and made a hole which could not be filled up. My sixth panel I made into a little key cupboard, of which I give a sketch. The interior is fitted



THE DRAWING-ROOM MIRROR.

with hooks, upon which hang the household keys. Small panels also make into nice oak brackets and square stands for a flower-pot ; but I must not linger over the small articles I carved, for I want to get on to the furniture.

I began with a set of dining-room chairs. I found in a furniture shop some strong deal chairs, with deal seats, unstained and unpolished. They cost two shillings each. I bought one as a trial, and began.

I got an ordinary transfer braiding pattern — a conventional pattern, which would carve well. I ironed it on to the seat of the chair, in the form of a border ; it was about three inches wide. I cut a grooved line on either side of the pattern, leaving the centre of the seat free from carving.

I cut the rails at the back of the chair in the same manner, but as they were not quite flat I found them more difficult. There were two clumsy wooden balls at the top of the chair, and those I cut into the shape of a flower, which much improved them. I then, after first rubbing well with sand-paper, began to stain. I gave each chair four coats of oak staining, rubbing down with sand-paper between each coat.

It was a trouble, but I arrived at a splendid colour at last. I then French-polished, and, at the expense of a great deal of rubbing, got my chairs to shine like glass. They are very strong, and look as if they will last for ever ; and, though they cost so little, they will always have a value of their own as art-work.

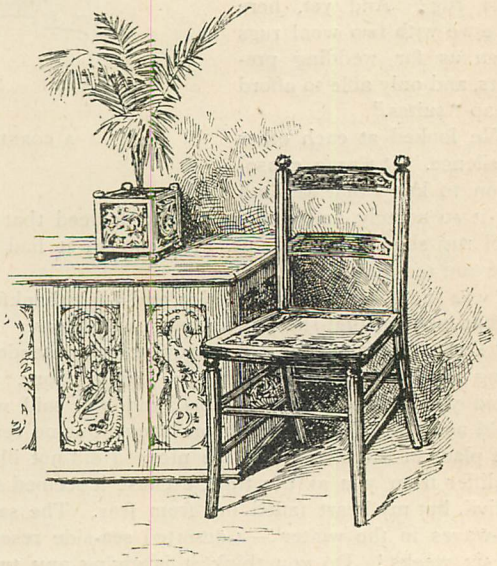
Encouraged by the chairs, I carved an old deal table in the same way. I wanted to make it into a bedroom writing-table, so I bought a piece of red leather, fastening it into the centre, carving a border round it. The bright-red looked very well with the dark wood. We also had a large deal box, upon which I carved panels of dragons, which I copied from an old oak chest.

These were, I think, all the deal articles we carved. The drawing-room was furnished in oak in its natural colour, but oiled, as oil brings out the colour of the wood.

We had a pretty cabinet, upon which was carved bunches of cherries and their leaves. The top of the cabinet was for books, and there was a little shelf over it for china. We also had a beautiful corner cupboard, with the door at the top in glass with leaded panes, and at the bottom carved in a conventional pattern, of which I give a sketch. Over the drawing-room mantel-piece hung an oak mirror carved by Susan. There was not, as you will see from the illustration, much detail or fine carving in the frame ; but the shape, being taken from an old Italian one, was beautiful in itself.

The walls of the drawing-room were hung with a dull blue paper. I filled up the square from the top of the mantel-piece to the ceiling with a plain piece of black oak. Upon this hung the light oak mirror, and on either side two very elaborate brackets, carved by Susan some time before.

Later on, we carved a mantel-piece with our initials and a motto ; but there was no time for that now, so we covered the mantel with a plain piece of printed velveteen, with which we also made the curtains. This velveteen is most artistic and not very expensive, as it runs from three and sixpence to five shillings a yard. We chose the Adyunta pattern in peacock blue, with pomegranates and birds in olive green and shrimp colour. This is a reproduction of fresco-painting in the caves of Adyunta, in the Province of Bombay, painted two thousand years ago, and a very beautiful pattern it is, though there are several others equally beautiful, especially one copied from the hangings of a State bed at Haddon Hall. I covered some of my drawing-room chairs with "cuir Bouilli," or



ONE OF THE CHAIRS, AND THE CHEST.

stamped leather. This art is very easy, especially to those who understand wood-carving; it is also most durable as it lasts for years, and so many useful articles can be made in it. I was afraid of having my drawing-room too light, so I covered the backs and seats of some black ebonised chairs with light oak-colour leather, on which I had stamped or moulded a pattern. I then painted the pattern with Indian ink, and covered it with three coats of ebonising varnish. The effect was very nice; and I covered an old arm-chair with leather treated in the same way.

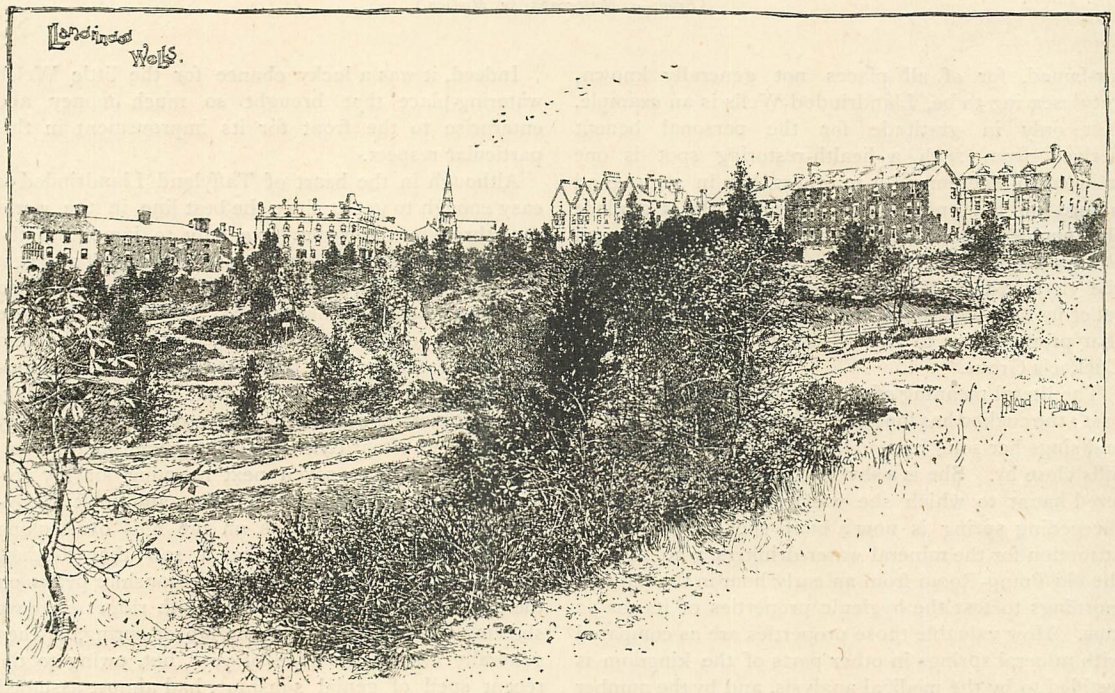
Two little chairs make bright spots of colour in the room, for I have stained the raised-up leather pattern in red, and blue and gold.

One little table I stained with green stain. This I like much better than paint, as all the grain of the wood shows through, and the stain simply becomes part of it; but it requires a great deal of care, as it dries directly, and unless a soft brush is used, and used very quickly, it will dry in lines. I found three coats necessary for my table, so I cannot say it was a cheap stain, though a highly ornamental one. We worked very hard; we made an awful mess in the way of wood-shavings; and we talked—oh, how we did talk, to be sure! Our engagement had not been a bed of roses. We had had more quarrels than most people, and we spent a great deal of time in talking them over. Susan was sure they were all my fault, and I knew they were entirely hers.

In our engagement days we had repented and apologised—almost with tears—one to the other; but, married, we found that those apologies meant nothing. We were neither of us sorry, but we could afford to laugh now, and we did; and if Susan got at all vehement she cut herself with her carving tool, and had to attend to her business.

It was all the fun in the world, and we were really sorry when the day came when our things were all arranged, and the old charwoman gave place to strange, awe-inspiring servants, and our door-knocker began to work, our friends trooped in, and Mr. and Mrs. Jack Smith began the world.

"THE WELL IN THE CUCKOO'S GROVE."



LLANDRINDOD WELLS.
(*From a photograph by Hudson.*)

"WHERE shall I go for a change?" I asked myself this spring, for my whole system seemed out of tone and wanted bracing up and renovating after a particularly vicious attack of that uncompromising enemy "la Grippe." Where should I go? I was not long in deciding. A certain picturesque little spot in wild Wales rose up before my eyes, and I had good reason to remember it, for only two years ago I was there, breathing its pure air, and drinking of its famous mineral waters during a prolonged visit of several months. Famous, but by no means

THE LAKE, LLANDRINDOD.
(*From a photograph by Hudson.*)

far-famed, for of all places not generally known, yet deserving to be, Llandrindod-Wells is an example. Not only in gratitude for the personal benefit derived from such a health-restoring spot is one induced to recommend it to others, but in sheer good nature towards one's fellow-creatures. It is a place that ought to be known, both for its own good and the good of the public ; and many a sufferer, especially the victim to gout or rheumatism, who has sought relief in vain elsewhere may be thankful for the hint that prompts him to pay a visit to the "Well in the Cuckoo's Grove."

The literal meaning of the old Welsh name is of the past : the cuckoo has long since deserted the grove itself, and sings her song instead from the beautifully wooded hills close by. She is a shy bird, and the once sequestered haunt to which she was wont to return in each succeeding spring is now a busy spot—the centre of attraction for the mineral water-drinkers, who flock to the old Pump-Room from an early hour in the summer mornings to test the hygienic properties of its magic taps. How valuable those properties are as compared with mineral springs in other parts of the kingdom is testified to by the medical analysis, and by the number of "hopeless cases" who have "taken up their beds and walked" out of the place.

And what a fine handsome hotel has sprung from the foundations of the old "Pump-House"—formerly nothing but a tumble-down farm—now a palatial mansion, beautifully furnished, with every modern improvement, and surrounded by well-laid-out pleasure-grounds, tennis courts and bowling-greens, all giving evidence of unstinted outlay.

Indeed, it was a lucky chance for the little Welsh watering-place that brought so much money and enterprise to the front for its improvement in this particular respect.

Although in the heart of Taffyland Llandrindod is easy enough to get at since the best line in the world runs through it, and you have only to jump into the mid-day express from Euston to find yourself amongst the mountains by sunset, in time for a "wash and brush up" before dinner at 7.30. Such was my case on arriving for my renewed visit, and though I found the place rather cold at this early season (for it stands 700 feet above sea-level) yet the air has not that dagger-point piercingness which seems to greet you at every street corner of our east wind-beleaguered metropolis.

When I rose at seven next morning for my prescribed course of sulphur and saline, and took a constitutional climb afterwards on the hills overlooking the pretty coot-haunted lake, I saw that Radnor Forest on the one hand and the Breconshire peaks on the other were no longer covered with ridges of snow, showing winter lingering in the lap of spring, as they generally are at this time of year, but, owing to the recent spell of genial sunshine, had almost assumed their summer aspect. And all around there were other signs in plenty of the softer season—in the budding verdure—in the air—in the presence of the birds themselves. I hear a wild plaintive note high up in the sky—a familiar note to me—the voice of my old friends the curlews, of whom I presently discern a pair wheeling gracefully down towards the hill-tops. Then at my feet as I walk along over the dead heather and withered peat-grass

rise the green plovers—also in pairs—flapping and scolding around my head and uttering their mournful cries with variations, something like the screaking of a soft quill pen at intervals. And scattered about are other evidences of spring in the brave little Welsh lambs just beginning their early gambols.

The long merciless winter, which had kept back everything in the shape of vegetation, and caused floral nature up to a fortnight ago to be all behind her time, has given way at last to the balmy breath of spring, with welcome results as I observe in passing through the woods.

On coming out of the lightly-clad woods, whose green-growing branches are now musical with the chirp and twitter and rapturous song of the love-stricken birds, and cresting the next breezy hill, I catch sight of another old friend in the distance, the winding Ithon, whose waters are gleaming in the early morning sun, as the river twists and turns in its serpent-like course through the valley. I cannot resist old associations, and in another half-hour have dropped down from the hills and am walking once more along the banks of that wild pretty river in which I have taken so many pleasant swims, throughout both the summer and the winter months. At every turn I see something to remind me of my former visits—that bubbling rapid so favoured by the trout—the still deep salmon-pool beyond, pretty sure "holt" for some twenty-pounder—the little water-ousels flitting from boulder to boulder—the old grey heron fishing sedately from a rock in the centre of the stream, who sinks his dignity on catching sight of me and flaps hurriedly away, keeping along the course of the river till he finds another rock to suit him further on. At the next bend a mallard rises with a nervous "quack! quack!" followed by his wife, who flies round and round in a wide circle overhead, telling me, what I have little difficulty in guessing, that she has made her nest somewhere hereabouts.

Ha! what is that lying on the shingle over there? Pah! I thought so! the carcase of a salmon—a murdered salmon—not speared by some Welsh miscreant, be it understood—no, or the best part would not be left to bleach on the river-shore—but killed by another sort of salmon-poacher—as confirmed a poacher on four legs as ever crossed a pool—who, let us hope, may pay the penalty of his depredations by and by when Major Hill brings his otter hounds this way.

THE LOVERS' LEAP.
(*From a photograph by Hudson.*)

Presently I come in sight of "The Lovers' Leap" beyond a bank of steep rocks which pulls me up in my walk by the water's edge, and wending my way through the Rock-House Park Grounds I return to the "Pump" by 9.30, and discuss a well-earned breakfast with an appetite such as one seldom knows in Piccadilly.

Already I feel another man; but it is not due to the Welsh waters (though they may help to effect the cure) but to the pure air and change of habits, which contribute more than anything else towards the setting up of a London-racked constitution. T. A. T.

CROOKED CRONIES.

BY JOHN ANDERTON.

"WHEN a man, Daniel Dodder, buys wretchedness with ready money and both eyes wide open, he's an idiot." Daniel nodded. "Why don't you say something?"

"You've drawn yourself to the life, Mathew Percher, and it isn't for an old friend to find fault with the portrait," answered Daniel.

"Paying in coin of the realm to watch snow falling into a greasy ocean is an act of lunacy," continued Mathew.

"It happens to be hail, but that doesn't materially affect the sound truth of your conclusion," said Daniel.

"I say it's snow," replied Mathew quickly.

"Hail! hail! all hail!" exclaimed his friend.

"Oh, very well, very well. I lived for twenty-five years in the midst of snow scenes, and of course I don't know snow when I see it."

"Snow? Five-and-twenty years? You did?" queried Daniel.

"I did. I bathed, breakfasted, bedded, and was born before I did either, with them all round me."

"Where, I would like to know?" Daniel sneeringly asked.

"At home."

"You've always told me you were born in South Staffordshire, and reared elbow to elbow with three big blast furnaces."

"So I was. My father was an ironmaster with a good deal of putheriness in his composition."

"Well?"

"Well, he naturally felt the heat internally, and early in life he took to painting snow scenes to take him out of himself, and when I was born every room in the house was filled with them; and now you have the preposterous effrontery to tell me I don't know snow when I see it! It's a gratuitous insult to my late father's artistic ability, and nothing less."

"I don't care. Art is art—sometimes; but facts are facts always, and that's no snow, and the landlord shall prove it. Just ask Mr. Vickers to step here, miss, will you?" Daniel Dodder added, turning to the waitress who, at the time, was dusting the room in which they stood.

The girl disappeared without a word, and shortly returned, following her master.

"Look here, landlord, my friend says that's snow," said Daniel Dodder, pointing out of the window.

"And my friend says it's hail," cried Mathew Percher, laying sneering emphasis on the friend.

"And we've called you in to decide," added Daniel.

"Well, gentlemen, I'm rather inclined to think it's a bit of——"

"Look here," said Daniel, breaking hastily in upon the landlord's remark, "we don't want any dead heat sort of opinion. If you say it's hail, you'll offend my friend; if you say it's snow, you'll offend me; but if you decide it's neither one nor the other, or a mixture of both, well—you'll grievously offend both."

"I'm very much obliged to you. You've been straightforward with me, Mr. Dodder, and I'll be the same to you; but that's hail!" concluded the landlord with much emphasis.

"The opinion of a man who doesn't know what he's talking about isn't worth very much," said Mathew gruffly.

"Pardon me, Mr. Percher. This is our slack time when our wits arn't whetted up on sharp customers; but if a man don't know, even now, hail from snow, who was born within sound of a dog's bark of this very spot—well, it's a pity;" and thus speaking the landlord left the room hurt in mind, yet triumphant in feature and bearing.

"Daniel, I think now that I was a bigger idiot than ever to come," said Mathew, with an overpowering notion that the natal place of Mr. Vickers was a mistake as a pleasure resort in early spring.

"Then why on earth did you?" Daniel irascibly inquired.

"Well, you said it would be beautiful here, and I knew it wouldn't, and I felt sorry for you."

"Why didn't you disagree with me as usual when I said so, Mathew, eh?" asked Daniel.

"Because that morning your breakfast had evidently disagreed with you, and I didn't want to follow the lead of a cheap rasher of bacon, and a not too fresh egg," Mathew replied.

"Bah! You're a fool, Mat," said the other gruffly.

"I'm very much what close communion with you has made me, Dan."

"Is that your deliberate opinion—that I'm a fool?" asked Daniel savagely.

"Oh, I think it's deliberate; I formed it over thirty years ago, and have held it ever since," answered Mathew.

"Very well, I think it's about time we parted."

"What are you doing?" Mathew asked, as Daniel moved to the bell.

"I'm ringing to give orders to have No. 10 and No. 11 bills kept separate from this instant. No account of mine shall have any more of the sickening messes you eat put down on it," Daniel replied.

The waitress entered in answer to the summons.

"Mary," he said, addressing the girl, "from this moment I dine, breakfast, tea and sup at a separate table."

"Yes, sir, and what about lunch?" the girl quickly inquired.

"And lunch too, of course," Daniel replied shortly.

"And snacks?" the girl asked with apparent innocence.

"Yes, yes," Daniel answered testily, "and ask the landlord to move No. 10 bedroom as far as ever

he can from No. 11. I don't care if it's over the stable, or underground, for that matter. Why don't you go?" he asked, as the girl stood still.

"Mr. Vickers told me just now to look more carefully after your comfort, gentlemen," Mary answered.

"Oh he did, did he? then you go and tell him to be good enough to mind his own business," said Daniel.

"He thought it was his business, sir; but I'll tell him."

"What else did he say?" Daniel asked.

"He said it was quite a touching and beautiful sight to see your friendship," Mary answered.

"Well, ask him to step in and have a good front view of it now. Anything else?" Daniel asked.

"He said that you two gentlemen had been down here together every early spring since he was a child of nine, sir."

"Then you tell him to forget it as soon as possible. We shan't remind him by coming again," Daniel said.

"Yes, sir. Do you take your early supper at the usual time, gentlemen?" Mary inquired.

"I do. I'm not going to be put off my regular habits for anybody," was Daniel's answer.

An hour later the two elderly gentlemen sat in the large coffee-room at two tables, one placed as close to the east wall as it would go, and the other rammed hard against the west end. Mary Aston waited upon the pair, and got more exercise out of the occupation than she'd before obtained when attending to the wants of half a dozen heavy and rapid diners. For as surely as one of them called her, so surely would his friend at almost the same instant of time demand her immediate attention. The two men seemed to eat, drink and mutter with the regularity of twin machines controlled by one set of valves, so synchronous and uniform were their acts and actions.

Supper ended, each made his way to the smoke room.

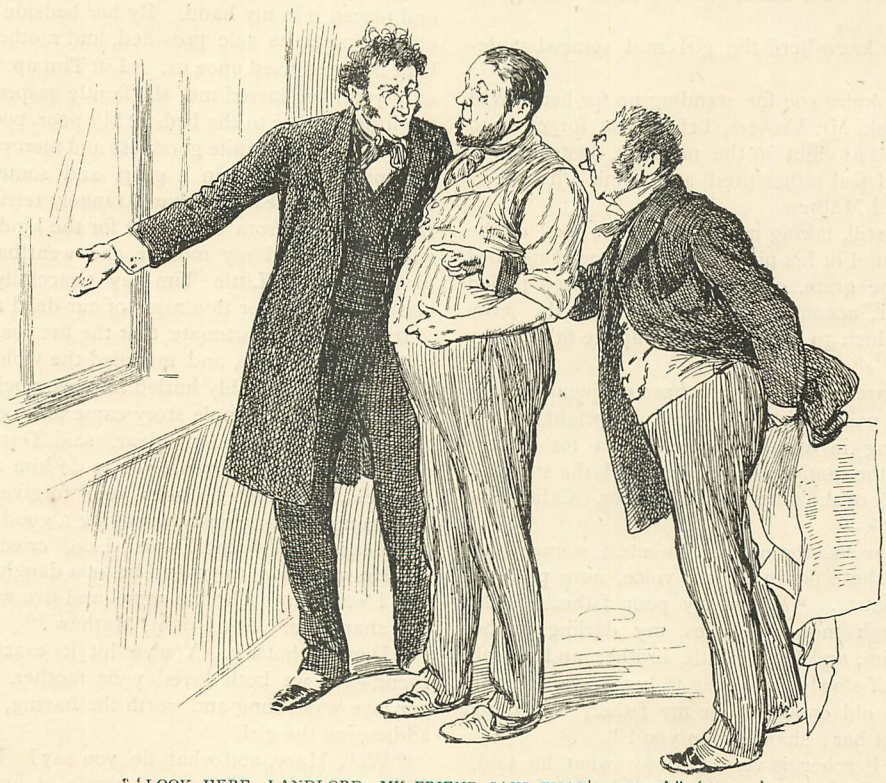
"Mathew," said Daniel Dodder after a long wait, "thirty years or more ago you did me a good turn. As I've forgotten to mention it before I thought I'd do so before we part."

"More likely than not I should have been a broken-hearted, miserable crotchety wretch this night if it had not been for you, Daniel, and I can't altogether forget it. If you hadn't made love to Louisa Machin, and I hadn't been jealous, and quarrelled with her, we might have married. Ugh!"

"You saved me. I broke off with her entirely through you, and I can't forget I'm your debtor for the deliverance. Pheugh! it makes my blood creep when I remember I was nearly tying myself to a woman like that," groaned Daniel.

"There always are a tremendous lot of daily blanks to an occasional trifling prize in the matrimonial lottery, but poor Wilfred Aston drew one that was blanker than most," moaned Mathew.

"She squandered his money, played ducks and drakes with his peace of mind, and made his hearth-



"'LOOK HERE, LANDLORD, MY FRIEND SAYS THAT'S SNOW'" (*p.* 530).

stone lie heavy on his heart. Would you believe it, Mathew, the wretched woman took to——"

"It is false," cried a strange voice with a large sob in it.

The two men, completely startled, turned quickly, to see the waitress Mary sobbing as if her heart were breaking.

"You—ought—to be—ashamed of yourselves—to—insult—a poor motherless girl," she wailed out between her sobs.

"Hallo! what's this?" asked Mathew astonished.

"Mad!" ejaculated Daniel.

"It is unkind of you. Oh! so very unkind of you to say untrue things of my poor dear dead mother," said Mary.

"Eh!" Mathew jerked out.

"Mother! what mother?" queried Daniel angrily.

Mary gave no answer. Her tears had ceased to flow, and she stood white and defiant, shaken now and again by convulsive throbs that her powers of will could not subdue.

"Daniel, there's a likeness," Mathew said with an air of semi-conviction after looking fixedly at the girl for some few minutes.

"You're right, Mathew, for once," Dodder said with unmistakable assurance. "Only in face, I hope," he added.

"I hope, sir, in everything," said Mary struggling to obtain command of voice. "My mother was the best and dearest lady in the world."

"Look here, my girl, we know all about her, knew her before you were born," said Daniel with great decision.

"You never knew her," the girl said somewhat defiantly.

"Mary, I admire you for standing up for her. Will you please ask Mr. Vickers, before you forget it, to have me called at eight in the morning, instead of a quarter to? I feel rather tired and think I'll take it out a bit," said Mathew.

She stood still, taking not the slightest heed of the request. Daniel lit his pipe, let it out, banged its bowl angrily on the grate, charged, relit and then puffed savagely at it, accompanying the puffs by the jerky movements which go to make up a complete fit of angry fidgets.

Mary appeared not to notice these eloquently angry actions. The pair might have been two upright angular rocks standing in a calm linoleum sea for all the visible effect the motions of the one, and the steadfast searching look of the other, had upon her. Calmly she began to speak—

"My mother was the noblest, sweetest woman that ever lived," she said in a low voice, now perfectly under her control. "When my poor father's health broke, through money worries, my darling mother worked for him, and for my little brother and myself, worked herself slowly but surely to her grave, and you, who are each old enough to be my father, have dared to speak ill of her; shame upon you!"

"Mathew Percher is very sorry for what he said," put in Daniel Dodder somewhat moodily after a pause.

"You said more painful things than he did," Mary quickly replied, turning her tearful eyes upon him.

"Of course I did," assented Daniel. "But you see I always apologise easier than he does, so I spoke for him."

"Quite right, you only do yourself justice," Mathew Percher said, as he arose and left the room.

"Mr. Vickers says you can stay here for some time," he began as he re-entered, "so sit down, there's a good girl, and tell us more about your mother. Speak out, there's a dear."

Mary's eyes filled again with tears at the recollections that came crowding forward to her mind. Lifting her hand she pressed it before her eyes.

"It was soon after little Tim was born our troubles began," she commenced in a sad voice. "Poor father, at the urgent request of a friend, had invested a large sum in a lead mine. What went into it never returned, and what wasn't put into it helped to take two gentlemen abroad beyond recall of the loud voice of the law, as dear dad used to say. His business was drained by the loss, and when his failure came, it found him utterly broken in health. Mother sewed hundreds of stitches for every bite of bread we children had, and thousands for each delicacy obtained for our poor invalid; sewed from early till late; sewed her strength and precious life away—for us—for us." The girl paused. The two men sat motionless watching her. "On the day she died," Mary continued, with a fixed far-away look in her eyes, "she drew off her wedding ring, and after whispering to me with difficulty, she kissed it fondly as tears ran down her poor cheeks, and placed it in my hand. By her bedside Tim and I ate the meal its sale provided, and mother the while kept her eyes fixed upon us. 'Lift Tim up, my darling, after you have kissed me,' she faintly gasped. I raised my little brother to the bed. 'My poor, poor darlings, may God in His infinite goodness and mercy watch——' her voice died away in a gasp, and something stole over the loved features that strangely terrified me. I ran frightened from the house for the kind neighbour who had nursed my mother, and went back clinging to her hand. Little Tim lay peacefully prattling, clasped by the poor thin arms of our dead mother."

It was rather fortunate that the fire roared up, and drowned the sniffs, and modified the violent discords that were very forcibly hurled into two pockethandkerchiefs, as Mary's simple story came to an end.

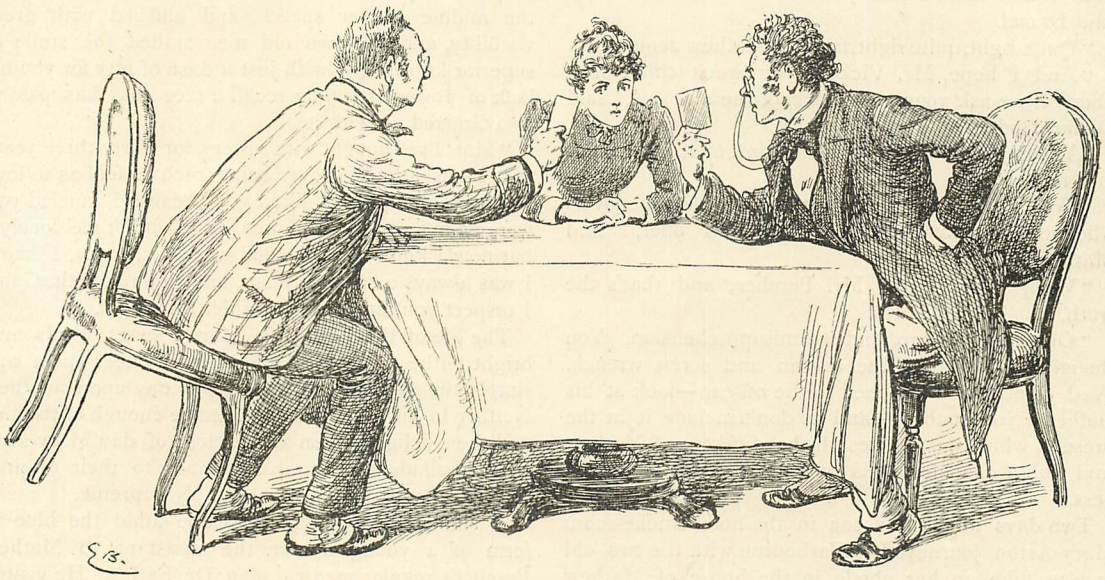
"Mathew Percher, my dear," said Daniel Dodder, after a long pause, "wants you to do him a very great kindness, and first he asks your forgiveness mixed with mine for atrociously wronging a good woman."

"Hear, hear! friend Daniel, I do," cried Mathew.

"He wants you to go and be as a daughter to him, and I want him to let me come and live with him too, and share you. Am I right, Mathew?"

"Daniel, that's it. You've hit it exactly, my old friend—for we both loved your mother, Mary, when our love was young and worth the having," he added, addressing the girl.

"Well, Mary, and what do you say? Mathew and I like each other. It seems strange at first sight—for



"'NEITHER OF THEM IS A BIT LIKE MY DEAR MOTHER'" (*p.* 534).

there isn't much to like in me, and precious little in Mat, especially when he's bilious—but you'll perhaps get used to it in time. We'd neither of us up till about a quarter of an hour ago got anybody to love; and we've hugged and nursed a phantom hate, a miserable brat born of hearsay, and we hate ourselves for it."

"We do, we do. I know Daniel does, I can answer for him," said Mathew.

"I don't know what to say," Mary answered.

"Look here, my child, it's like this. It was your mother who, thirty-three years ago, first brought us together as rivals and enemies, and we've been friends ever since. Two hours back we quarrelled and were about to part for good, and you came and drew us together again. We're a couple of crotchety old chaps who have got nothing to do, and too much time to be miserable in. Come and show us how to spend our time and Mathew's money in making other people happy. Go back with us to-morrow."

"Hear, hear! Daniel. I always said you ought to be in Parliament," exclaimed Mathew delightedly.

"I beg your pardon, you never said anything of the sort," replied Daniel.

"I have! I have really hundreds of times—to myself," answered Mathew.

"What do you say to the 9.15 to-morrow morning, Mary?" Daniel asked, turning to the girl.

"I couldn't leave Mr. and Mrs. Vickers; they've been so very kind to me," she answered.

"That all?" exclaimed Daniel, evidently much relieved. "Oh, we'll soon settle that," he added, as he tugged vigorously at the bell. "Mr. Vickers," he commenced, as that gentleman entered, "we've found out that Mary's the daughter of an old friend of ours, and we've partly persuaded her to come and live with us and keep Mr. Mathew Percher's house."

"Well, I don't know, Mr. Dodder, Mary's very dear to my wife and children, and besides, her father is a very old and valued friend of mine."

"*Is* a friend of yours, Mr. Vickers?"

"Yes, *is*, although he is on the other side of the world," the landlord replied.

"Taken there with Tim at Mr. Vickers's expense by his cousin. Wasn't it good? wasn't it noble and generous of him? and dear father's getting quite strong again," cried Mary feelingly.

"It's for the child's good. I'm convinced of that, and she shall go with you," said the landlord, ignoring Mary's speech.

"I couldn't leave you all, and I won't," said Mary emphatically.

"On the condition that you bring her to see us for at least a fortnight in every year, and at our slack part of it, when we've got time to see that we make her enjoy herself."

"If we don't bring her twice a year so long as we are able, you shall teach your babies to call us what we shall be—a couple of crusty curmudgeons; and if you and Mrs. Vickers will come and stay with Mathew Percher for a month, we shall be delighted to have you, and take your coming as a special kindness to Mary," Daniel Dodder said with decision.

"You're very kind," said the landlord.

"And, Mr. Vickers," mildly put in Mathew Percher, "I think I saw you and Mrs. Vickers trying our double tricycle at daybreak on Thursday week last."

"I thought about getting one, and I wanted my wife to see how she liked it before going to the expense," the landlord replied.

"I gave him permission. It's your machine, Mathew, but it wasn't worth bothering you about. You're an individual who'd much rather a man took

your watch than asked you to tell him the time," said Daniel.

"Quite right, quite right, friend," Mathew acquiesced.

"And I hope, Mr. Vickers, you won't think it a liberty if we ask your wife to accept the machine," said Daniel Dodder.

"You're too kind, we couldn't think of it," the landlord replied.

"Wait a bit, wait a bit. I thought you'd be overwhelmed and astonished at Daniel's offer," said Mathew.

"Well, I really am, Mr. Percher, and that's the truth."

"Of course you are, under a misapprehension. You thought he included the oil-can and screw wrench. Well Dan's much attached to the oil-can—look at his clothes if you doubt it—and he don't include it in the present, which just makes all the difference," Mathew said with a chuckle at his own imaginative facetiousness.

Two days after the scene in the hotel smoke-room Mary Aston journeyed to Farbourne with the two old men to take up her abode in the house of Mathew Percher, Daniel Dodder leaving his rooms to make a third.

On the day of his arrival the last named fished up an old daguerreotype of the woman he had loved for one year, and hated for thirty-three. It was a poor faded affair. It could be seen—what there was left of it—only in one light, and if you were pretty active on your feet, and could dodge your head about like a clever light-weight scientific boxer, you could catch that likeness in something like three minutes. Naturally it took Mary nearly double that time, and when she had accomplished the feat she unhesitatingly declared it to be not the least bit like her dear dead mother.

Mathew Percher seemed a bit cast down at the portrait; his depression only lasted through the day, for on the morrow he exultingly produced a hideous silhouette of the same original, mounted on a huge expanse of white, and framed in startling patterned gilt. This work of art had also its proper point of view; looked at from behind this, it took on the semblance of a framed dinner napkin with a ragged hole in the middle of it.

"There! what do you think of that?" Mathew exultingly asked as he withdrew the covering. "That's the sort of portrait I delight in. Age can't wither, nor custom stale its infinite want of variety. What do you say, Mary, my dear, eh?"

"Neither of them is a bit like my dear mother," she replied.

"Time," said Daniel, "has taken something out of my daguerreotype, but what's left is the very image of what she was."

"And that profile I could swear to anywhere as hers," said Mathew, pointing proudly to his silhouette.

Mary shook her head unconvinced. "Time does change people, but it doesn't often turn a Grecian nose up, nor make curly fair hair dark and straight. That's more like what my Aunt Louisa was when I first remember her, and before she——" Mary broke off in the middle of her speech, and blushed with great visibility, and the two old men smiled the smile of superior knowledge, with just a dash of pity for youth's lack of power to vividly recall a face that has passed away, mixed up with it.

"Mat, I've thought with misery for thirty-three years that I was a fool for ever being such a fool as to love Mary's mother, and I liked you because I fancied you were as big an idiot as I was, and I didn't feel lonely; but now I know what a good woman she was, I know I was always a sensible chap, and you're another, and I respect you for it," said Daniel exultingly.

The life of the pair, with Mary's sweet words, and bright blithe manners to please and cheer them was simply the following of one happy day upon another. Neither in his gratitude could make enough of the girl, and their delight, when at the close of day Mary sang simple ballads in a simple manner to their original simple accompaniments was simply supreme.

A small cloud by and by came amid the blue in form of a young doctor, the assistant to Mathew Percher's regular medical man, Dr. Farley. He visited the house to see Daniel through a cold, and having accomplished the feat, he continued to call, mostly in the evening, and stayed it out. These attendances did not appear in the bill, and this omission puffed out and at the same time thickened the cloud until it became markedly obtrusive to the self-elected pair of guardians to the girl.

They liked the young medical's honest look, appreciated fully his strength and skill, and gladly listened to stories told by their friends of his sympathy and kindnesses to the sick poor of the place, but they disliked with a common intensity his too evident enjoyment of Mary's singing.

Mathew's nods and odd looks, and Daniel's shrugs and snorts, though emphatic, failed at length to adequately express the feelings that called them into play, and speech had to be enlisted into the service.

"He isn't in a position to marry, though a man of his talents ought to be; but he isn't, and that's a great comfort," muttered Daniel.

"But we could buy him a good practice as a present to Mary, eh, Daniel?" suggested Mathew Percher.

"You could; but when the time comes it must be somewhere where we can take the next house. Confound him!"

"Exactly," Mathew agreed. "Confound him!"

"And mind, we won't hear of anything under a two years' engagement," Daniel said with emphasis.

"No; and we can crowd a good deal of enjoyment and a fair amount of songs if we look alive into that time," Mathew answered.

But something happened on one dark afternoon in January, and came upon them with terrible suddenness. It began by the housemaid saying Mr. Dodder and Mr. Percher were wanted. "He's in the drawing-room, if you please," she added.

"Who is?" asked Daniel petulantly.

"He gave his name as an old friend, sir, that was all he said," the young girl answered rather confusedly.

The two men entered the room together.

"Wilfred Aston!" exclaimed Mathew Percher with something like a groan, as he recognised the visitor.

Daniel Dodder muttered something under his breath.

"How are you?" asked Aston, looking from one to the other. "You don't welcome an old friend with embarrassing heartiness," he added.

"Oh, we do, but we've got into rather a quiet way of doing things," Mathew answered. "Won't you take a chair?"

"Thanks," the visitor replied as he seated himself.

A long pause ensued, during which all three stared hard through the one small window.

"We didn't expect to see you, Wilfred, and that's the fact," Mathew said at last.

"Evidently. If I'd known it would take you this way, I'd have given you notice," the visitor replied.

"Confound it! we know what you've come about, so get it over," Daniel irritably said.

"Look here! I think it's about time you ceased to cherish resentment against me for taking Louisa Machin from you," said Aston.

"You seem born to annoy and pain us, though it isn't quite your fault," Daniel answered.

"If you knew one half of what I suffered in my married life, you'd pity me," Aston replied with a sigh.

"We know everything, Wilfred, and we do pity you," and Mathew held out his hand as he spoke.

"I had a hard time—hard all the way through; but there! I dare say there were faults on both sides," Aston said, ending with a sound that was very like to a groan.

"I suppose we may as well get it over and done with, Mathew; I never cared about bribing a dentist to take his own time in drawing my teeth," Daniel sharply said.

In answer to this speech Mathew nodded in agreement, and the pair left the room.

They found Mary in her little sittting-room singing softly over her work.

"There's someone downstairs, dear, who's come to take you away from us," Mathew Percher softly said.

A bright flush suddenly suffused the girl's face, her eyes falling and remaining fixed upon the carpet near to her feet.

"I—I don't—understand you," she said, as neither of the men seemed inclined to break the embarrassing silence.

"We couldn't be as happy as we've been for long in a world built like this is, on the roaded bacon principle, where a streak of joy, and a broad band of wretchedness is the prevailing order of architecture," Daniel growled.

Mary rose from her seat and warmly kissed the angry old gentleman, and passing on to Mathew bestowed upon him a warm caress.

"We have been, and are so happy together. You are so kind and good to me. Why should we part, at least, so soon?" asked the girl.

"Well, there's one turned up who has a better right to you than we have—hang him: Daniel replied. "That is why."

"But remember, my dear, we shall always be glad to have you back if he wants to leave you," said Mathew, as he turned his face to the wall.

"I won't leave you;" saying this Mary seated herself, and calmly took up the work she was engaged upon when they had entered.

"Then you go downstairs and tell him so; and if he smashes the windows and shatters the ornaments, pretend not to notice it; but if he looks savage at you, just pull the bell, and we'll come and more than reason with him," Daniel said, as he led Mary to the door. "Confound him! why didn't he stop at the Cape?" he asked savagely, as the girl left the room completely mystified.

"Yes; why didn't he?" asked Mathew.

"I don't know. Don't try to answer my question by echoing it. I suppose this chap is what they call a nice fatherly man with all the instincts of his species strong in him, eh, Mathew?"

"Well, Dan, we can't blame him for claiming his daughter."

"Can't we? I tell you what it is, if Mary had been unhappy, and we were anxious to get rid of her, the paternal instinct would have indulged in a sound sleep; but because taking her away will make her miserable, make me depressed, and you bilious, his heart-strings plait to the strength of cart-ropes. Bah! don't speak. A mother's affection is mostly moonshine, but a father's is a fraud. Thank goodness we're not burthened with either one or the other, say I. And now let's go down and see the farce. Why what on earth's happened?" he asked, as he entered the drawing-room.

"Nothing at present. The pleasantest incident that could happen to me would be an introduction to this young lady," Aston replied, with a smile.

"All right," quickly responded Daniel Dodder. "Mr. Wilfred Aston, permit me to introduce to you your daughter. Is there any other fool's game you'd like me to play for your amusement? If so, you've only to mention it."

"Well, I think you might wire off to my three lads, and advise them that they've a grown-up sister, and prepay the replies. I fancy if you're not thin-skinned you'll find the fun in them worth the outlay," Aston said, with a merry laugh, which set Daniel off, just as Mathew and Mary apparently simultaneously came athwart the very best joke of their lives.

"Wilfred Aston, we were dear, close friends in our boyhood, youth and early manhood, you, Daniel Dodder and I——" began Mathew Percher.

"And we never had through them all half so high an opinion of you as we have at the present minute," said Daniel, breaking in.

"That's true, and you must stay a month with us; nothing less will suffice to anything like show what our opinion is," put in Mathew.

"And all because I'm not the father of my own niece, my cousin Wilfred's daughter."

"Yes; you see it's this way," Daniel said with

mock seriousness, "we both dearly love this girl, because years and years since we each loved and was engaged to her mother, whom it now transpires we never in our lives clapped our eyes on."

"A very rational proceeding," Aston answered, laughingly.

"And equally rational were our bitterness and resentment when we thought you were about to rob us of the child of a very dear friend who is a complete stranger to us," Daniel said, with a dry chuckle.

"I see," Aston said, "you thought——"

"You don't know what we thought; but from what we heard we fancied we'd unconsciously done each other a good turn a many, very many years ago."

"I know what you're hinting at, and it's a painful subject, so if you don't mind we'll dismiss it and my hansom—three and sixpence an hour is too much to spend for holding a portmanteau which might just as well stand in my bedroom——" Aston hintingly said.

Mathew hurried out, and a bustling sound in the hall followed by a hearty "Thank yer, sir," and a bang of the front door, told decisively that the visitor's portmanteau had been transferred, and the cabby had gone away rejoicing over something very considerably above his fare.

The gratitude of Mathew and Daniel was active in different ways. The former's was evidenced by an uncontrollable fussiness for the comfort of his guest, and an increased solicitude for Mary's care and enjoyment; the latter's was shown in half-aside declarations of his own idiocy in making such a mistake as to fancy Aston could possibly have a daughter like Mary.

When dinner was announced he started a long rambling story interlarded with a series of robust grumblings that had no manner of relevancy to the narrative.

This procedure was so unlike his usual course that Mary and Mathew independently concluded something was very wrong with him. It *is* upsetting to find a man dallying, who, as a rule, is out of the drawing-room, and settled napkin on knee before the gong has done vibrating. He was apparently not half-way through his inconsequential tale when, at a ring of the front door bell, he closed his story in the middle of a sentence, and giving Mary his arm rushed her in to dinner.

The four were hardly seated when Dr. Gaultier was announced.

"I am sorry to be late," said the newcomer.

"Apologies never bring soles back from the leathery to the tender state, so we make it a rule here never to wait dinner a second for anyone," growled Daniel.

"We are very glad indeed you've popped in, Doctor Gaultier, very glad; it's very friendly of you," said Mathew.

"I was very much afraid up to the last moment that I shouldn't be able to join you, and had just written——"

"Help yourself to bread," Daniel broke in.

Daniel's rudeness enlightened Mathew and Mary as to the reason of the rambling story, and revealed the fact that the young doctor had been invited, and had not popped in.

A year later Daniel bought with Mathew's money the practice of Dr. Farley, and in less than a year hence—if her father sends his consent from the Cape—Mary will be married, and as Daniel with a cheque of Mathew's has purchased the lease of the house next door which is to be void in a few months, the parting with Mary will be no parting after all. Both the old men intend visiting at Dr. Gaultier's pretty frequently, and Daniel declares that if they will not be welcome as friends they can't be refused admission as patients, and a nine-inch wall can't altogether stifle a ballad nor completely annihilate even a simple accompaniment.

THE YEAR'S JEWELS.

BY M. C. GILLINGTON.

SARDONYX: AUGUST.

Conjugal happiness.

SHAFTS of white on the edge of the night
The moon and the evening star,
They pour twin streams of slender light
On the hill where the wheat-sheaves are.
The soft wind slides down the dark hill sides,
It sings to the ripened ear
Of joy and peace, and the year's increase,
And you, my dear!

It sings as it strays in the yellow ways,
It calls through the shadowy sheaves
Filled and fraught with my darling's praise,
A delicate song it weaves.
Sweetheart and wife and love of my life,
It blends with the voice of me
To crown you queen of all that has been
And yet shall be!

An Old-Time Song.

Words by WILLIAM COWAN. *Music by* PROF. GORDON SAUNDERS, MUS. D.

Andantino poco Allegretto.

PIANO.

1. Flow,..... soft - ly flow,..... thou murm'ring
3. Breathe,..... gen - tly breathe o'er her ro - sy

stream ! Flow,..... soft - ly flow,..... thou murm'ring stream ! Nor
cheek, Breathe..... gen - tly o'er..... her ro - sy cheek, Lest

dare dis - - turb my lov - ed one's dream ;.....
thou her hap - py slum - - ber break ;.....

Flow, soft - - ly flow. With lull-ing sound glide past her
Breathe, gen - - tly breathe. Per-haps of me she dreams to -

bow - er, With lull-ing sound glide past her bow - er; Nor wake her in this hap-py
day,..... of..... me she dreams to - day,..... Her ex - iled lov - er far a -

hour, Nor wake her in this hap-py hour; With lull-ing sound glide past her
- - way, Her ex - iled lov - er far a - way! Per - haps of me she

bow - - er, glide past her bow - er, Nor wake her in this
dreams, her lov - er far a - way,..... her lov - - - - er

hap - - - - py hour.
far a - - way.

1st time only. 2nd for finish.

2. Blow,

rall.

..... soft - ly blow, soft - ly blow, thou balm - y air, The ru - dest winds would

hush to spare So dear, so sweet, so bright a flower! Blow soft - ly past her

tran - - quil bower, past..... her tran - - quil

ppp

bower; The ru - - dest winds would hush to spare So

pp

bright, so dear, so sweet a flower! Blow soft - ly

past her tran - - - quil bower.

D.C.

rall. . . . .

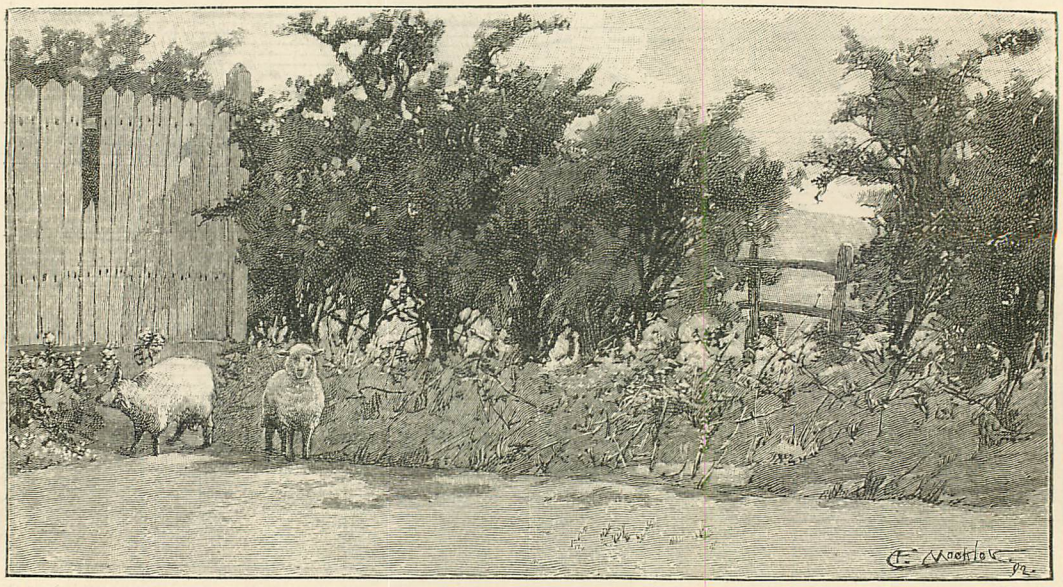
D.C.

Ped.

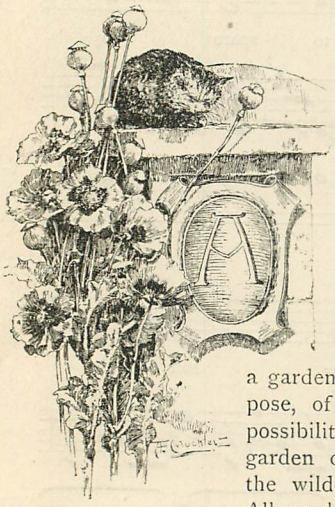
Ped. *

HOW A WILDERNESS BECAME A GARDEN.

BY A PRACTICAL GARDENER.



HOW A HEDGE SHOULD *NOT* BE KEPT.



CHAPTER THE SECOND.

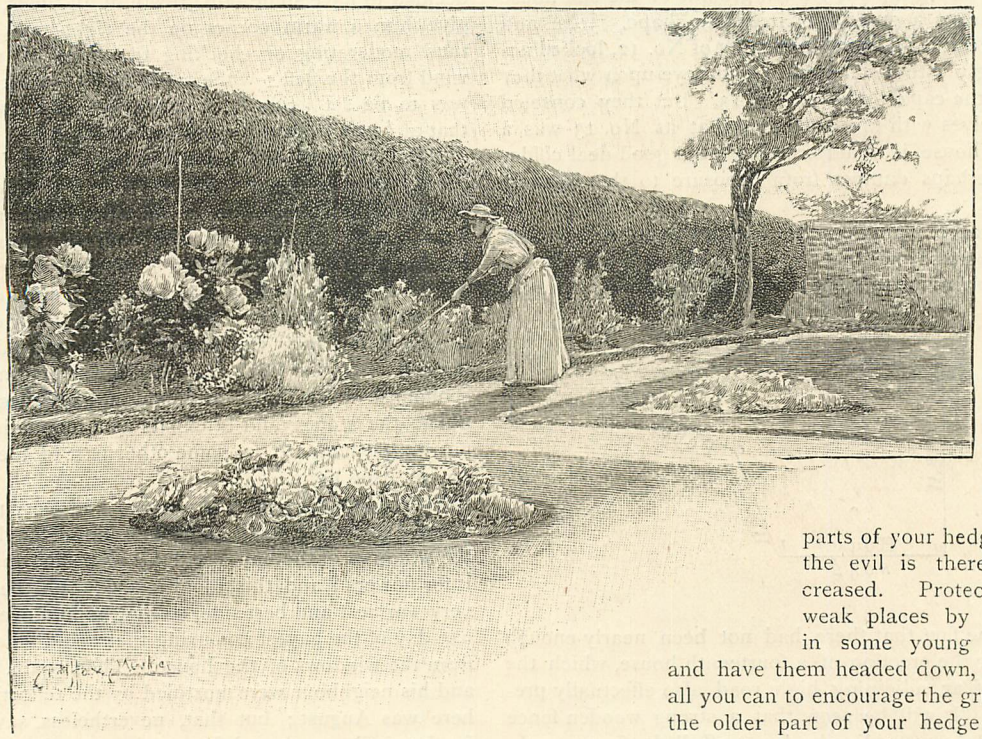
ABOUT GARDEN HEDGES AND FENCES.

ALTHOUGH the "wilderness" at the back of Highland Villas, which stood near the top of Hampgate-on-the-Hill which we described last month, was rapidly assuming more the promise of a garden, yet we must not suppose, of course, that by any possibility a real and thriving garden could be evolved from the wilderness in a few days. All gardeners are notoriously—and perhaps naturally—impatient; that is to say, they are eager for rapid progress and success to crown their labours.

But at Highland Villas there was, as we have seen, heavy and solid foundation work to be done, so that in our natural impatience to enter at once into a discussion upon the merits of flowers and fruit, we must not be beguiled into slurring over the very essentials of garden success.

And, strange as it may sound, we must first say something further as to the garden hedge. We must remember that along the bottom of all the future gardens of Highland Villas ran a boundary hedge. The construction of a wall is decidedly an expensive affair; the very *foundation* of a wall that is to be carried to no great height, has to be laid at a depth that would astonish many of our readers, so that the builder had, in this case, determined to allow the existing hedge to constitute, at present at least, the boundary of the property. A short wall or wooden fence divided each of the gardens from one another, but all tenants and new proprietors at once saw that a *substantial* and *compact* hedge was an absolute necessity.

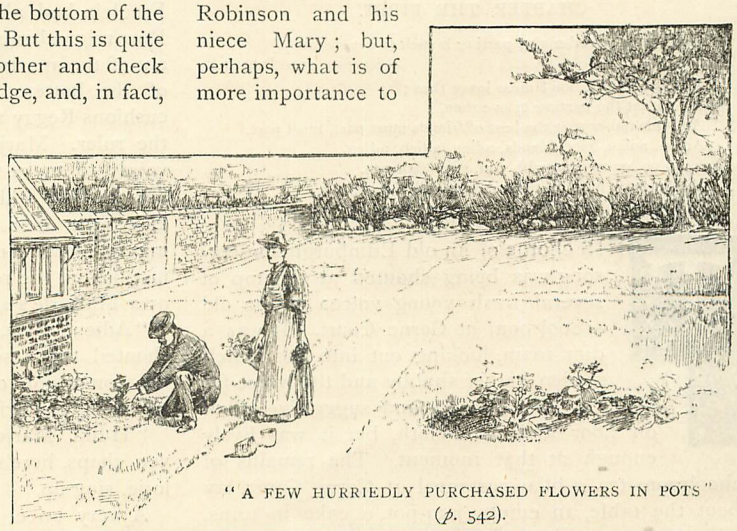
Now it is a mistake to suppose that a *wide* hedge is necessarily the most serviceable one in the case we are supposing, for the best protection is afforded by a close and *compact* one. It is indeed the wide hedges, far more than the narrow ones, that afford a complete harbour for all such vermin as snails and slugs, which are the terror of gardeners. Under its cover these garden thieves lie close all day, and at nightfall issue forth to plunder the garden adjoining. And perhaps the best hedge that can be named is the white-thorn or quick-set. These we appropriately term "live fences." And this sort of hedge can be grown so close as to become simply impenetrable. Any evil-designing person can climb over a wall, but a well-grown hedge is a decided difficulty to surmount. A good hedge, however, wants regular attention; for by a neglected hedge weeds soon establish themselves, the seeds from which are apt very quickly to get blown over the garden to its very great detriment. But the hedge *from the outset* should be kept constantly and closely trimmed and cut, and the barrier will then be impenetrable. We know too that the nature of the quick-set hedge is to grow upwards, and you will soon



A MODEL HEDGE.

notice that if the hedge is not attended to, it will certainly be a *tall* one and even thick at the top, but unhappily *all open at the ground.* Now the only, but effectual remedy for this is frequent trimming and cutting down, as by this means the growth is thrown into the lower part, which in our case is the very thing we want. Then again a very tall hedge would at times cast an undesirable shadow over the garden. The bottom of the hedge should at all times be kept thoroughly free from weeds, and on this point we must be particular, and for this reason, the popular idea often is that such growth as, say nettles at the bottom of the hedge, contributes to the protection. But this is quite a delusion, for the weeds merely smother and check the growth of the lower part of the hedge, and, in fact, gradually *kill* the bottom of it. And this, when the weeds are themselves growing, you will not notice; but autumn comes, the weeds die down, and your weak and spindly hedge then comes to view, and affords an easy entrance into your garden, not merely big enough only for dogs and cats, but perhaps for two-legged depredators as well. Another popular error in respect to hedges is the stopping any gaps in the lower part with some dead thorn branches, for this again only tends to check the growth of the living parts of your hedge, and the evil is thereby increased. Protect these weak places by putting in some young plants, and have them headed down, and do all you can to encourage the growth of the older part of your hedge in the necessary direction. Careful trimming and clipping, however, as we have said, will take away all fear of a weak hedge, if, too, weeds are *never* allowed to grow as well. Finally then, let us say as to our hedge, that if a weak one it should be pruned quite in the *early* spring, so as to give every opportunity to the buds to make an early and a vigorous push. Some five feet in height and two feet (or a little more) in width at the bottom, should be the limit of the dimensions of your garden hedge; indeed, four feet will often suffice for its height.

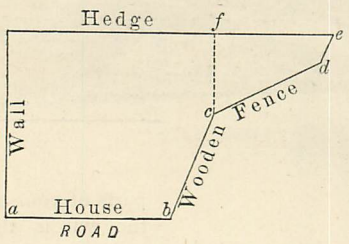
Now we do not forget that these Highland Villas consisted of thirteen houses, that No. 13 had just been taken by Mr. Charles Robinson and his niece Mary; but, perhaps, what is of more importance to



"A FEW HURRIEDLY PURCHASED FLOWERS IN POTS" (*p.* 542).

our purpose, that the garden ground of the end house was one of a somewhat irregular shape. John and Alice Smith, the new occupants of No. 12, looked accordingly with a somewhat jealous eye upon what they called the capabilities of No. 13. But they consoled themselves with the reflection that as No. 13 was a corner house, it would probably be a good deal colder and perhaps damper from exposure to the westerly rains.

The accompanying little sketch will go to show that there were several more square yards of garden in No. 13 than in No. 12; but the circumstance merely arose



from the fact that there had not been nearly enough land for the erection of a fourteenth house, which the curve of an adjoining high road also effectually prevented. It will be seen that a strong wooden fence along the crooked line *b c d e* cut off all the fierce north-westerly winds, and as none of the gardens were particularly wide it was hoped that the wall on the left would cut off a good deal of the east wind. And along the dotted line from *c* to *f*, Charles Robinson at once decided to have some tall growth at all times, so as to give him a warm corner on the right-hand side by thus moderating or checking the force of the east wind from the left; while, as in No. 12, a corner at *a* was to be set aside for a pit or perhaps a frame, and that at *b* was to be a diminutive tool-house.

Now, in trenching the extreme right-hand side of the No. 13 garden, the ground was found somewhat unpromising and very stony; so that John and Alice were puzzled on looking one morning from their window to find that Charles Robinson was gradually accumulating a perfect heap of stones and brickbats, and wondered that they were not quickly carted away or sent flying over the hedge into the "wilderness" beyond. But the fact was, Charles was determined to economise everything, and had already decided to utilise the stones and brickbats as a foundation for a narrow garden path in some other part of the garden not yet fixed upon.

Then again, Charles had already and very properly decided to have a small grass plot immediately under the windows of the house with a few beds arranged on it for flowers; and this too he saw would be on the very warmest and best side, so that he had every hope one day of the gayest colouring that could be admired from the windows of the house. Then again, both he and his neighbour were mortified by the reflection that here was August; but that, nevertheless, save for a few hurriedly purchased flowers in pots dotted about in places near the house, no one could know what month of the year it was, so that the "wilderness" element still largely predominated on nearly all sides.

LADY LORRIMER'S SCHEME.

By EDITH E. CUTHELL, Author of "The Story of a Glamour," "The Yacht in the Bay," etc. etc.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

"Good-night, good-night, parting is such sweet sorrow!"
—ROMEO AND JULIET.

"FARE thee well, for I must leave thee;
Do not let the parting grieve thee,
And remember that the best of friends must part, must part.
Adieu, adieu, kind friends, adieu, adieu, adieu,
I can no longer stay with you, stay with you.
I'll hang my harp on the weeping willow-tree,
And may the world go well with thee."

THIS chorus of an old Edinburgh student-song was being shouted at the top of several fresh young voices in the old schoolroom at Cerne Court. It was a dim room, looking out into the Dutch garden, rather shabby and the worse for wear, hung with maps and suggestive of ink on floor and table-cloth, but it was lively enough at that moment. The remains of schoolroom tea, a hilarious meal at Cerne Court, lay about the table, an empty jam-pot, a cake in ruins. Fraülein had abdicated temporarily and disappeared. Row reigned supreme. Irene, the indigenous inhabitant of the apartment, had perched herself on the top of the battered old sofa, on whose long-suffering cushions Reggy was beating time to the chorus with the ruler. Marjorie Aston sat at the piano, trying vainly to make the chords heard against the voices; her brother Bill stood shouting by her side; Cyril Erle, the heir of Cerne Court, leant against the mantel-piece; and Hubert, the hero of the hour, sat just behind the piano, on the schoolroom table, looking over Marjorie's shoulder.

"Adieu, adieu, kind friends, adieu, *adieu*, ADIEU!" shouted the assembled company, when suddenly, at the conclusion of the chorus, Reggy, the small boy, looked up inquiringly in the face of the accompanist.

"Hullo, Marjorie, why ain't you singing? Here, you chaps, here's Marjorie shirking! Sing up, Marjorie, sing up."

A very sweet face, though by no means a strictly

beautiful one, looked down upon the small boy, and a soft voice answered:

"All right, Reg; I'm all right. I can't shriek against you all; and besides, I've got to play."

But a red flush had spread all over her face when Marjorie found herself discovered. Hubert leant forward over her shoulder.

"We've had enough of this, I think, Marjorie, eh? Shall we shut up? This song gives me the blues!"

The dark eyes were very dewy that she turned to his, but before she had time to answer Bill interposed:

"Look here: let's sing that other song about the 'Six Jolly Buffers,' ye know, and the thingumbob jacket!"

"But Hubert doesn't wear a what's-his-name jacket, do you, Hubert?" asked Irene. "That's a sailor; Hubert wears——"

"What *do* you wear, Hubert?" interrupted Bill, looking up inquiringly.

"He dressed up the other night for us in his uniform. He was lovely just!" cried Irene, in sisterly exultation.

"Oh, I *would* have liked to have seen!" sighed Bill Aston.

"So should I!" added Marjorie, twisting herself round on the music-stool, so as to face Hubert abruptly. "Oh, Hubert, if you could again!" she implored.

"It will be good practice for him," remarked Cyril patronisingly from the fireplace, with the dignity of an elder brother and an Oxford undergraduate, "seeing that he's got to learn to dress in and out of it two or three times a day, eh, Hubert?"

Hubert was a shade sheepish. He needed a little more pressing, especially from Marjorie; and in the end Bill and Reggie, assisted by Cyril, seized him forcibly, and half-carried him upstairs to effect the wished-for metamorphosis.

When Fraülein entered from her inner sanctum, where she had taken refuge, she found the girls alone, cowering over the fire.

"And where is our gall*ant Herr* Lieutenant?" she asked. "Why, Marjorie child, how tired you do look! You do too much, child: your lessons, ze zick peoples, ze paareesh. I——"

"Oh no, Fraülein, I've only got a headache," began Marjorie, reddening again.

"It's the noise, dearie," added Irene, toying with Marjorie's long pendant plait of brown hair. "We made a fearful row! I feel quite as if I could lift up my voice and weep myself, I'm so low. It's those stupid songs. Aha! 'See-ee the conquering he-he-he-hero comes!'" she cried, as the door opened suddenly and all the boys burst in, Reggie seizing the ruler again, and shouting "Sound the trumpets, be-e-e-e-eat the drums!" with an obligato accompaniment upon the tea-tray.

Sub-Lieutenant Hubert Erle, newly-gazetted to Her Majesty's 200th Regiment, strode into the room, trying hard not to feel self-conscious. He looked very slim and young in the tightly-moulded tunic, and the face which beamed down upon them all over his high collar was very boyish, despite the dark down shading his upper lip.

"Fine feathers, ahem!" Cyril could not resist saying, as he looked up at him, in an elder brother tone.

But the others had seized Hubert, and were looking him over, his badges, his buttons, his facings; while Reggy got hold of his sword, and terrified Fraülein by lunging with it at the girls.

"Isn't he *beautiful*, Marjorie?" asked Irene, proudly, of the vicar's daughter.

Marjorie grew shy and hung her head, blushing.

"Oh, Marjorie! And you might say I *am* when I've got into all these togs just for you to see," added Hubert.

Thus appealed to, Marjorie glanced up at him.

"I never saw anyone in uniform before, except the postman, you know——"

"Or the Salvation Army——"

"I think you look awfully nice," she added, with a twinkle. "But I hope you feel *comfortable?*"

"One for me, eh, Marjorie?" laughed Hubert.

"When I've a chance," laughed the girl, who had quite brightened up now. "You see, you boys do go on at us girls so when we have a new frock on!"

But he turned abruptly to rescue his beloved blade from the hands of the boys.

"It must be awfully difficult to walk about with?" remarked Cyril.

"I wonder how many times it will throw you down, eh?" jeered Reggy, at a safe distance from his big brother.

Hubert was about to go for him, when the door opened, and Lady Erle entered. She looked up at her tall stepson with an amused smile.

"Are you aware, dear boy, that the dressing-gong has gone? Unless you mean to honour us this last evening with——"

"Oh! Lady Erle, is it so late?" cried Marjorie, much perturbed. "I must fly home. I promised mother to help her with the Coal Club accounts to-night. And Bill: where is Bill? You've got *all* your preparation to do, Bill. Come home *at once!*"

And she began bidding hurried good-nights all round, while Bill vaulted out of the low window, unobserved of Fraülein, and departed by way of the Dutch garden.

"Good-night and good-bye, Hubert," Marjorie went on. But he interrupted her.

"Oh! but I must see you down the avenue, for fear of the bogies. Mother," he called after Lady Erle, as they passed into the hall and she went upstairs, "pacify the pater for me if I keep you waiting. It's my last night."

And he followed Marjorie out of the front door into the gloaming of the October evening.

It was quite dim down the avenue, and for a while a silence followed, a half-constrained silence after the noise and freedom of the house, and neither spoke. The two figures walked side by side under the arching trees, he so gorgeous and clanking, and she, in her shabby frock, somewhat outgrown—a slim young form,

a shade too thin for her height, but neither angular nor ungainly.

Marjorie found her tongue first, woman-like.

"Anything more about Smudge, Hubert?"

"I don't think so, thanks. Mind he don't get too much meat—it will spoil his coat. Poor Smudge!"

"Are you *quite* sure you won't take him with you?"

"Oh no; those long-haired dogs never do in India, and Nip is enough to take. I'd rather leave Smudge—with you, Marjorie, if you really don't mind?"

"Mind? I shall *love* having him."

"And you'll write, won't you, Margy?"

Her head hung down, and she hesitated.

"What about?"

"Anything, everything—Smudge."

"You won't want to hear out there, you'll have such a lot of new things to do and see——"

"Won't I? Only try me, Margy. Say you'll try me?"

"Well, perhaps."

"Promise, Margy, or I shall take Smudge with me! Promise, do. Home won't seem so far away if you'll write to me," he added, in a low voice.

She looked up at him with a sudden frank glance of trust, with something in it beyond her years—something which seemed to make her of a sudden womanly and older than he, instead of two years younger.

"All right, Hubert," she said, "I'll *write*."

There was another little silence, and they walked on. It was getting quite dark, and the light in the lodge window twinkled ahead through the thinning leaves.

"And—look here, Margy: you'll think about me sometimes, won't you? I'd like to think you think about me, you know, when——"

"I write to you, or feed Smudge, eh?" she laughed.

"No, no, Margy; don't chaff," he went on, earnestly. "I'm quite serious, indeed I am. You are so good, Margy. Girls are so much better than men, that I think if you were to think of me sometimes—at church, you know, or when you say your prayers—it might help a fellow to keep straight, d'ye see——"

The beacon light in the lodge window was flaring right out into the middle of the drive; before them lowered the heavy park gate. He was looking at her intently, and saw that she was hanging her head uneasily.

"I will—I will, Hubert," she answered, in a half-whisper. Then she stopped still and held out her hand. "You mustn't come any further; I hear the dinner-gong. Bill will be waiting for me at the gate. G—good-bye."

She looked up at him, and he bent his head to her. A sudden wish came over him to kiss her, as he used to do when they were both little. But, as he hesitated, an unearthly shriek, as of fifty bogies, proceeded from behind a tree, and Bill burst out upon them in what he fondly imagined to be a most alarming manner.

"Good-bye, good-bye!" cried Marjorie. "Come along, Bill, and don't be an idiot," she added, starting off to the gate at a run. "I'll not forget about Smudge's meat," she called back.

Hubert waited a moment where he stood, but, when the gate clanged to in the darkness, he turned round and went back up the avenue, bursting involuntarily into whistling the chorus:

> "Hang my harp on the weeping willow-tree,
> And may the world go well with thee!"

"Oh, bother that stupid song!" he ejaculated, breaking into a run which left him no breath for melody.

When Marjorie got home Mrs. Aston thought her a long time taking off her things and coming down to help with the Coal Club accounts. She little guessed that the girl was kneeling by her bedside, sobbing as if her heart would break, while Smudge, the brown terrier, unaccustomed to his new home, and clinging to his only friend, sat looking up at her wistfully.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

"The hero and the man complete."—ADDISON.

THERE was, one autumn evening, a little dinner-party at Great Morchard Rectory. Canon Bucknall, rector of Great Morchard and canon of Idleminster, was a well-to-do man, and rather a social power in Loamshire, and was well supported by his wife, a London lady, who had money. This dinner-party was to welcome two newcomers into that corner of the country. One, Mr. Marshall, the new tenant of Darfield Hall, a retired Indian merchant, was at this moment sitting on the sofa, conversing with his hostess and another guest. He was a thin yellow man, speaking with a rather affected accent, and wore a harassed look, as of one who had worked hard and got early tired out.

"And you think you will like English country life, Mr. Marshall?" Mrs. Bucknall was saying.

"Won't you find it very quiet after Calcutta?" added his other neighbour, the elder and elderly Miss Gillinghame.

"Perhaps," replied Mr. Marshall, with an obtrusively polished manner, which jarred somewhat with the worn look he could not overcome. "We in India are very sociable, you know, see a great deal of each other—lots of horses, plenty of hospitality—Calcutta, for continuous amusement, comes up to London almost."

"You will then *certainly* find Loamshire dull," laughed the young lady. "We vegetate here. No one gets any rents in, or does anything except hunt. And then, it is chiefly strangers who make up the fields; we natives can't afford to keep horses as we used to. There is very little entertaining, except spasmodically, about Christmas-time."

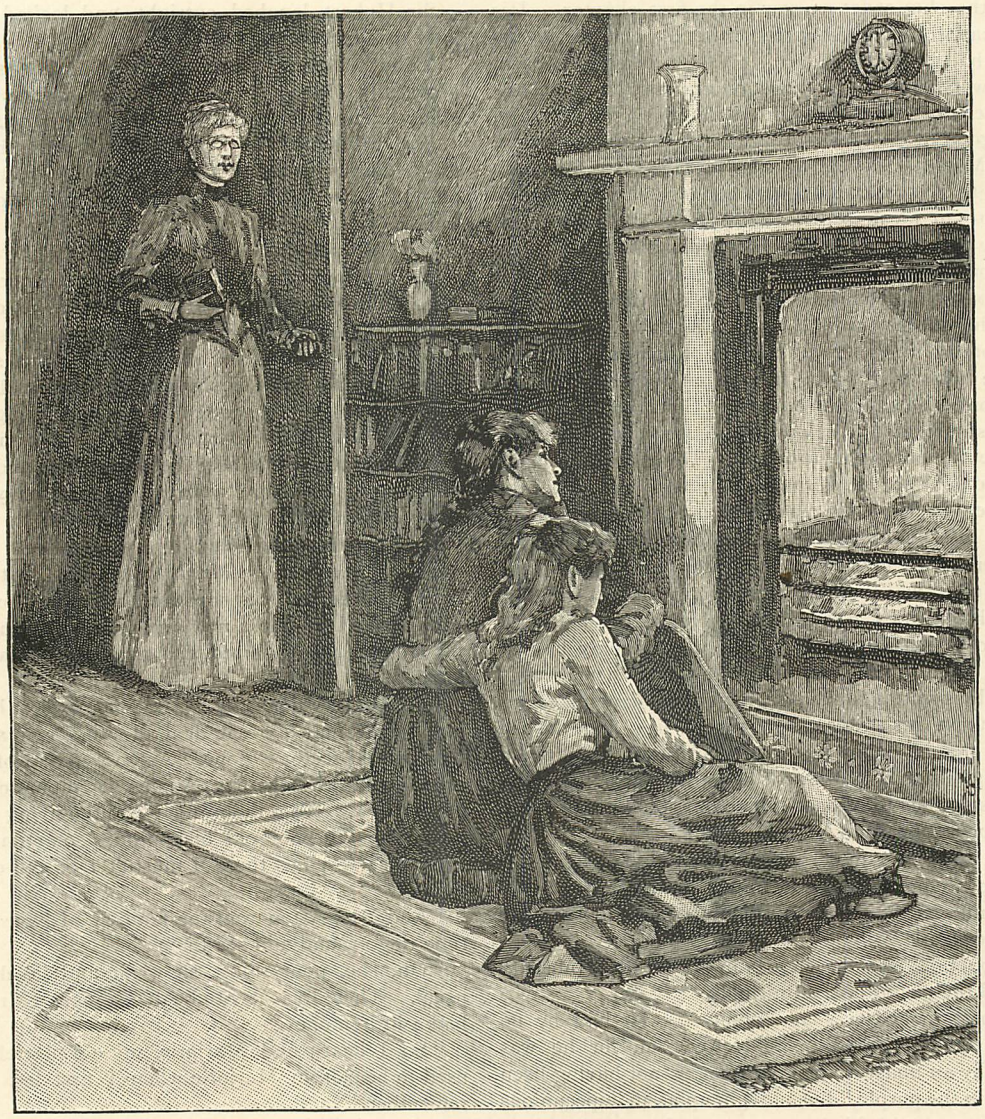
"I shall not mind the quiet," returned Mr. Marshall, "especially in company of such charming neighbours as I have already made acquaintance with," he continued, with a bow which quite won Miss Gillinghame's heart. "Darfield's a pretty place, suits me admirably. I shall hunt a little, shoot a little, run up to my clubs a little; and then, my girl Effie is rather delicate. She couldn't stand the racket of London. I want her to have a quiet winter in the country."

"She certainly does not look strong," replied Mrs. Bucknall, looking across the room to where the canon was conversing with a very pretty, but rather transparent-looking little girl, with an exceedingly vivacious, not to say excitable, manner, and who was prattling volubly.

"Quite a romantic story, Canon Bucknall! And good-looking, too! How nice of you to ask me to meet such a hero! I'm longing to see him!" she was saying.

"My dear young lady," replied the canon gallantly, "the honour is quite on our side; and, as for good looks, I can't quite say. Hubert Erle has not been down in Loamshire for the last eight years—not since he joined the army. After his father's death Lady Erle preferred London and her Cannes villa to Cerne Court, and poor Cyril, Cowes, and the Mediterranean yachting, to anything else in the world. Then Hubert was much abroad soldiering. He was on Sir Redtape Martinet's staff in South Africa, and, but for poor Cyril's sad drowning, I don't suppose he would ever have given up the army. But, of course, the owner of Cerne Court has duties in Loamshire, and I hear he means to live here a great deal now. Now I come to think of it, I don't fancy that assegai thrust he got in the face at Ulundi can have improved his looks much."

"Wounded, and in battle? Oh, how interesting!" she cried.



"SHE FOUND THE GIRLS ALONE, COWERING OVER THE FIRE" (*p.* 543).

"However, you shall judge for yourself; I expect this is he," added the canon, as the drawing-room door opened and the footman announced:

"Sir Hubert Erle."

Eight years' knocking about and campaigning in hard climates had considerably altered Hubert Erle from the slim cadet we saw in the first chapter. His hair had thinned about the temples, and his moustache had grown thick. His cheek, marked by a nasty scar, was tanned with exposure, and his tall figure had broadened about the shoulders and filled out. But he was good to look upon still, though in a different way. Effie Marshall, devouring him with her eyes, instantly came to the conclusion that he was quite her ideal of a hero—an ideal drawn chiefly from the novels and poetry with which her little head was stuffed.

Though placed next to Miss Marshall at dinner, it was some time before Hubert Erle had time to observe anything more than that his neighbour was a remarkably pretty little girl, with a mass of fluffy fair hair. A curate who had taken her in engrossed Effie, and everyone else at table engrossed Sir Hubert. It was his first appearance in Loamshire since his accession to the title and the property. There were so many questions to be asked, so much new to tell of all the changes in the neighbourhood since his boyhood. Then Miss Gillinghame, the elderly young lady, got the hero of the hour on to his military experiences; and Sir Hubert was made, very much against his will, "to fight his battles o'er again." He began haltingly, goaded by the spinster opposite, till suddenly he perceived that his little neighbour had torn herself away from the curate's conversation, and was hanging eager-eyed upon his words, her parted lips and flushed cheek making her a very pretty picture. Sir Hubert, nothing loth, turned towards her, and instead of directing his recitals to Miss Gillinghame, found it easier to talk about himself to Effie Marshall.

The latter was in a seventh heaven of delight. It seemed to her that never had a dinner-party (at her age somewhat of a dreary infliction) passed so quickly and pleasantly.

"You talk like the heroes in books, Sir Hubert!" gasped the girl at last, admiringly.

Hubert looked a shade annoyed. He had by no means quite relished being trotted out, for he was naturally an unassuming young man—not having been "born in the purple," but brought up as an impecunious younger son, with his own way to make.

"I most devoutly hope not, I'm sure," he replied. "I hate talking about myself, and I am afraid you have thought me a most conceited sort of fellow. I've only been telling you, though, things which happened to heaps of other fellows as well. We've had so many little wars lately; everyone now has seen some service."

"Oh! I dare say," replied Effie. "But I've never met a *real* soldier before. In fact," she added, "I've never met anyone much."

Sir Hubert smiled. Her *naïveté* was so palpable, her admiration so sincere.

"I suppose not," he began.

"You see, I only left school last spring," she went on, "when papa came home from India. And I've been at school ever since I can remember almost—ever since mamma died. It's dreadful to be so young and to have seen nothing!" she added, in a melancholy manner.

Sir Hubert laughed outright, and looked into the little face turned up to his.

"That's a disadvantage which will cure itself, Miss Marshall. Many people——" and involuntarily he glanced across the table at Miss Gillinghame.

But at this moment Mrs. Bucknall gave the signal for the ladies to leave the table, and a rustling and pushing back of chairs stopped all further conversation.

Effie Marshall followed the others into the drawing-room, and found herself drifted into a corner with the Miss Gillinghames and May Trevor, none of whom she knew well. The three discussed subjects she was not up in, indulged in jokes she did not see, and generally made her feel shy and uncomfortable. Poor Effie longed for the gentlemen to come in again, and began to wish dinner-parties had never been invented, unaware all the while how the three girls, under a veil of assumed contempt, were green with envy of her Paris gown, and taking mental notes of it, with the view of copying it at home.

At last they came; Mr. Marshall first, buttonholed by Mr. Blayke, the Master of the Loamshire Foxhounds, who scented in him a new and munificent subscriber. Sir Hubert Erle followed, Canon Bucknall talking to him.

"Ah yes, my dear boy!" Effie heard their host saying, "you'll find a great deal of difference at Cerne now the old rector is gone. Aston was one of the old school, and the new man, Adams, is emphatically one of the new. It's a thousand pities the living is not in your gift; the poor old bishop does sometimes make such mis——; but there, I mustn't talk evil of dignitaries."

"And Mrs. Aston and the family? I have not had time to go round and see them yet."

"Oh, she, poor thing, as weak and invalidish as usual. They live at Studlegh Grange. Mrs. Aston had a little money."

"So I hear; and Marjorie, my old playfellow? I used to hear from Marjorie when I first left home, I remember."

"Ha! fine girl that! Head screwed on the right way. Thrown away in Cerne, I should think, though I hear Adams finds her very useful in the parish. The boy has gone abroad, engineering in South Africa, and——"

"Miss Marshall, may I introduce my brother Arthur? He wants *so* to know you;" and Miss Gillinghame leant across to Effie, and prevented her hearing any more of the conversation. A pasty-faced youth in a vast shirt-front loomed above, drawling something incoherent. But the next moment someone came and sat down close beside Effie on the sofa, and, to her intense joy, Sir Hubert's voice sounded in her ear.

"Such a wet night, Miss Marshall, and you have a long drive home."

Effie looked up, flushing with pleasure.

"And how the wind howls!" she replied, with a slight shudder. "It's horrid!"

"Horrid for Arthur and me, who are going to get up at six to go out hunting to-morrow," laughed Bee Gillinghame, who was a mighty huntress.

"I can't bear to hear it," replied Effie, shivering again. "It makes me feel quite creepy."

"Melusina—the Wild Huntsman—witches riding: that sort of thing?" asked the curate, who was hovering round for such crumbs of conversation as Effie might vouchsafe to him.

She gave a little pout. "I dare say you think me silly," she replied, detecting a covert smile on the faces of the other girls, who had drawn up round her when Sir Hubert appeared. "But I can't help it; it *does* make me feel creepy."

Arthur Gillinghame actually took the trouble to laugh a little.

"Didn't know anyone ever went in for that sort o' thing now, aw!" he remarked, settling his camellia carefully.

Arthur Gillinghame was a young man who had failed three times in his examinations for the army, and now lived at home, hunting a little, and shooting a little, and paying great attention to his clothes and his button-holes.

"Didn't you?" remarked Sir Hubert rather curtly, looking the youth up and down. "Well *I* do; *I* understand exactly what you mean, Miss Marshall," he continued, turning to Effie, who smiled upon him delighted, as on a champion. "I felt 'creepy' when I saw the ghost, I know."

"The ghost!" gasped Effie, a sudden scared look coming over her variable face. "You saw a *ghost!*"

"You don't mean it, aw!" drawled Arthur Gillinghame, fixing his eyeglass, and surveying Sir Hubert as if he was a ghost himself.

"Oh, Sir Hubert, how awfully interesting!" exclaimed Bee Gillinghame, bending forward with a sudden assumption of interest.

"Oh! *do* tell us!" cried May Trevor, beaming upon him irresistibly, as she considered.

Miss Gillinghame smiled a little superior smile at him, as much as to say, "You are making fools of them, but *I* understand you."

But Sir Hubert turned away from them all, and bent towards Effie.

"Would you care to hear?"

She caught her breath spasmodically, lifting to him frightened eyes, and gave a little nod.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

"I can call spirits from the vasty deep."
"Why so can I; or so can any man:
But will they come when you do call for them?"
KING HENRY IV.

"IT was just such a night as this," began Sir Hubert, as his little audience drew closer round him (including the curate, who sat a little on the outside of the circle, as if not quite sure if he ought to countenance ghost-stories); the Misses Gillinghames arranging themselves in picturesque attitudes, and their brother crossing one leg over the other, and intently admiring the clock of his silk sock. "It was just such a night as this: wild, wet, howling wind, pitch dark—I ought to begin like that; only I can't, because it wasn't. It was a very fine summer night, quiet and starlight, new-mown hay smells about, and nightingales, perhaps; and I stranded at a wayside junction, having missed my train. I didn't know what on earth to do! There was not a decent inn for miles round or a train till next morning. Luckily, I recollected that a brother officer of mine had his home near. I remembered the name of the place, and as he had always been a great friend of mine, thought I would chance it. I hired a baker's cart and drove over to—I won't mention names, as the story's true, remember. As luck would have it, my friend was at home. It was late, and everybody (the house was full of visitors) gone to bed. Only my friend and a few men up in the smoking-room. They gave me some supper, and we sat up a little, talking, and then A—— showed me up to my room. It was an old, old country house—Tudor, I think—and as we walked along the passage he pointed to a door and said, with a laugh: 'That's the haunted room; we keep a ghost here!'"

Effie Marshall shivered slightly.

"My room was next to it. When I was left alone, somehow I didn't feel a bit inclined for bed. (Perhaps it was the late supper.) Anyhow, the idea struck me to look into the next room; there was a door between the two rooms. It seemed an ordinary, very old-fashioned room enough——"

"Big bed—oriel window—old oak furniture; don't forget the properties," sneered Arthur Gillinghame.

"Arthur, be quiet," remonstrated his elder sister. "Sir Hubert is telling us a *true* story, and we're all *very* frightened, remember."

Sir Hubert hardly heeded the interruption; he went on as if talking to Effie Marshall alone, whose large blue eyes were fixed on him.

"It didn't look particularly ghostly; but, anyhow, I thought I'd wait a bit, and sit down and see what might turn up, or *not* turn up. And just then the clock struck twelve."

"And what happened?" cried May Trevor.

"*The ghost came in!*" replied Hubert, in a low voice.

"Ha!" gasped Effie Marshall, drawing a quick breath.

"The door opened noiselessly. A figure in white, flooded with a green light—a female figure, I think—with hair down, advanced into the room; and there followed the most unearthly blood-curdling shriek I ever heard, and never wish to hear again," added the narrator, insensibly lowering his voice, and dropping his eyes on to the floor.

"And what *did* you do?" asked Bee Gillinghame, after a moment's silence all round.

"I bolted!" said Sir Hubert simply.

"Well, plucky of you to tell us!" remarked Arthur Gillinghame.

"Not at all. I should do so again to-night under similar circumstances, I am sure. I know quite well what the unearthly, *creepy* feeling means, Miss Marshall, and I'm not ashamed to say so. Not for worlds would I have gone into that room again at night! I didn't tell anyone then, though. My friend sent me over quite early the next morning to catch my train, and I know nothing more about the ghost or any story."

"Awfully rum thing, though," remarked Arthur Gillinghame.

"I'm not easily put off my balance, I think," Sir Hubert added. "I had a nasty shave once when I fell off my horse, wounded and helpless; I saw a Zulu, dead as I thought, rise up in the moonlight and have a dig at me; and once, in Burmah, tiger-shooting on foot, a tiger charged me within a few yards, and I saw the inside of his open mouth. But nothing gave me a turn like that ghost did."

Effie nodded at him sympathetically.

"I know, I know," she said, in a low whisper. "I saw one too, once."

"Indeed, Miss Marshall," sneered Miss Gillinghame. "Now, I should have thought you were the sort of person often to see ghosts!"

"Only that once," replied Effie, with a shiver, quite impervious to the sneer, and shaking her head thoughtfully, her eyes staring at the carpet.

"Could you tell us?" asked Sir Hubert gently.

She lifted her eyes to his.

"If you like."

"Oh, do," asked Arthur Gillinghame, fastening the pretty little figure with his boiled gooseberry eyes.

"I was staying in a house in—but perhaps I'd better not tell you where," began Effie in a low tone, as if talking to herself. "There was a haunted room. The girls, one night when we were all brushing our hairs in each other's rooms at bed-time, dared me to go into it, because I said I believed in ghosts. It was very unkind of them, because I was dreadfully frightened—oh, dreadfully! But they almost *made* me go, and I went. Down a long passage, all alone—quite still the house was—oh! I remember now how still," she went on, with a shudder. "And the stable clock struck twelve. I turned the handle of the door—I opened it—I went in—*the ghost was there*, sitting in a big chair by the fireplace——" and Effie ceased abruptly, covering her face with her hands as if to shut out some dreadful sight.

"But what was it like?"

"What did it do?"

"Perhaps you'd better not go on; it's too much for you," said Sir Hubert gently, laying his hand on the girl's bare arm. It was icy cold.

At his touch Effie uncovered her face. It was deadly white.

"I can't tell you—any more," she gasped. 'I don't know any more—I think I must have run away down the passage, and have fainted—they found me lying there. Papa was very angry——"

"Papa was very angry about what, my child?" asked Mr. Marshall himself, coming up to the little group.

Effie's face brightened up, and she laid her hand clingingly in his.

"It's time we were going, I think," added Mr. Marshall.

"Oh, Mr. Marshall, and we were just having such an interesting conversation," murmured the elder Miss Gillinghame sweetly.

"Telling ghost stories," added her sister.

Mr. Marshall's face grew suddenly grave and harassed, and he looked sharply at his daughter.

"Come, Effie," he said firmly, without paying any attention; "come and say good-night to Mrs. Bucknall."

There was a general uprising as the Marshalls took their leave. Effie held out a cold little hand to Sir Hubert, who spoke over her head to her father.

"I shall do myself the pleasure to ride over to Darfield to-morrow afternoon, and call on Miss Marshall and see your horses."

"I thought you were coming cubbing to-morrow, Sir Hubert?" put in Bee Gillinghame.

"Too wet and too rough a night. Foxes won't lie," he replied, and as the Marshalls left the room, himself took leave of his hostess.

"The older inhabitants lingered a few moments behind the new-comers, who had just departed.

"Pretty little bit of what's-his-name china, but nothing in her," drawled Arthur Gillinghame to Mrs. Bucknall.

"Sir Hubert seemed to be of a different opinion," put in the canon good-humouredly.

"Oh, he's been in the wilds for years, and hasn't set eyes on a woman——"

"Or a gown," sighed May Trevor enviously. "Mrs. Bucknall, did you *ever* see such a love of a gown?"

"Dear Mrs. Bucknall, *good*-night," said Miss Gillinghame. "Thank you for *such* a pleasant evening. *Char*ming man, Mr. Marshall. But the girl seems a perfect idiot!"

"Hubert Erle's just the same as he used to be," remarked the canon to his wife as the last carriage rolled away, and he walked round the deserted drawing-room, thriftily blowing out the wax candles.

"As nice as ever," echoed the lady. "But really, Augusta Gillinghame gets sourer every day."

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

"A spirit hath led me to thee, love"—SHELLEY.

DARFIELD HALL, as the crow flies, lies but two or three miles from Cerne Court, but the More rolls between. To drive from one to the other, you have to go round by Great Morchard and over Morchard Bridge. It was a still autumn afternoon as Sir Hubert Erle got into his dog-cart at his front door to go over to the Marshalls'. The leaves were sere and yellow in the avenue, and dropping noiselessly one by one upon the damp ground. The rooks were cawing loudly in a newly upturned field across the park paling. Out-

side the lodge-gate lies the little village of Cerne, the church actually standing in a corner of the park. At the last cottage in the straggling row—a quaint thatched little structure—Sir Hubert suddenly pulled up.

"Giles," he called to his servant, "knock, and see if Mrs. Merton is in."

No need. Hardly had the dog-cart stopped than a white cap peeped over the blind, and the next moment a little old woman opened the door, her wrinkled face, rosy like a withered apple, beaming with smiles.

"Heart alive! and if it isn't my boy!" she exclaimed, extending both hands and grasping those of the tall young man, who had to stoop his head to enter the little room. "Beg pardin', *Sir* Hubert; but, bless my soul, it *do* seem so nat'ral-like to see you agin!"

And two tears welled out of the sunken eyes and stole down the withered cheeks.

"Well, nurse, and how are you?" said Sir Hubert, seating himself in the cushioned chair, and putting his feet on a wonderful hearth-rug, composed of different shreds of cloth and material all knitted together. "All just the same, I see," he continued, looking round the room: "the red china dog we used to admire so on the mantelpiece, and the coloured print of Trafalgar; all our photographs, what sights we were! and you, dear old nursy, not a day older-looking!"

"I'm fairly well for my years, thank the Lord!" said Mrs. Merton, seating herself opposite him and smoothing her apron, "and comfortable, thanks to your good pa and poor Master Cyril as is gone!"

"And things shall be just the same now with me, never you fear, nursy — the cottage, the little pension——"

"And to see you now and then, Master Hubert, that's what I'm hungered for sometimes, the sight o' some of your faces. That's more to me nor vittals a'most!"

"Yes, indeed. In fact, I feel guilty at not having been down to see you before. But, remember, I've only been home three days, and every minute of them I've been pestered with the bailiff, and the tenants, and grooms and gardeners—there's so much to do, so much to see to."

"Ah, to think as 'ow you're master here, Sir Hubert! Who'd ha' thought it? Poor dear Master Cyril! He were always that venturesome, even in the nursery," she continued, wiping her eyes and shaking her head. "And my pretty Irene, too, married, and a ladyship now! And you be growed, I think, and quite the soldier—and that's the scar, the nasty wound they told me of!" she added, passing her withered hand over his tanned cheek.

"Yes, nursy, there are indeed great changes, though in many ways the old place seems just the same as if I had never been away."

"There's the old rector gone; we miss the old rector."

"But you've got a very zealous hard-working parson, I hear."

"Too hard-working for the likes o' me! He comes from a big town does Parson Adams, where there's lots of people, and plenty of bad 'uns. But down here in Cerne, little bit of a place like this, where we knows everybody, and everybody knows the parson, we don't want a lot of classes and guilds, and meetins', en'tainments, and what not, and a rushin' and a tearin' up and down the place, and a poppin' in and out o' folks' houses. We're quiet folks we are, here. Why, in the old days if anybody was ill or wanted the rector, we'd just go up to the rectory and see him, or Miss Marjorie——"

"Ah, Miss Marjorie! I've not been able to get down to the Grange yet. How is she?"

"She's just the same in herself. But, lor! sir, to see her, you'd never think she was the thin little slip of a girl as you left. She's grow'd up that fine and tall and straight, and her voice that sweet, it do you good to hear it, let alone what she says."

"She comes to see you sometimes?"

"In course she do. She be about the village just the same as in her father's time, and folks do say——" and the woman stopped with a little meaning smile.

"Well, and what do folk say?"

"As how Miss Marjorie 'll live agin at the Rectory yet. 'Tis common talk. Why, Sir Hubert, only a few weeks back, at Sunday-school, she was askin' little Ned Bryant (him as is half a 'innercent,' ye know) what a miracle was. 'Why,' sez he, he up and sezs, 'Mother sezs it 'ull be a miracle if you don't marry th' new parson.'"

"And Miss Marjorie?"

"Didn't half like it, 'specially as the rector was a-standin' by. But lor! Neddy's three parts daft, ye know, sir, and I, for my part, think it 'ud be a good job if she did. She'd quiet him down with her soft voice, would Miss Marjorie, and he needs a power o' quietin' down. He's a deal too fidgety for my taste!"

Here the old clock in the corner chimed the hour and reminded Sir Hubert of fleeting time. He got up, promising soon to look in again, and was presently bowling down the hill towards Morchard Bridge.

Miss Marshall was at home. There were other callers: Mr. Blayke, ingratiating himself with Mr. Marshall and the Miss Gillinghames, the elder of whom was intent on doing the same thing, and had driven over on purpose. Of Bee Gillinghame it was said in the hunting-field that if Mr. Blayke hunted the Loamshire hounds, she hunted Mr. Blayke. But hitherto her chase had been futile.

Effie Marshall Sir Hubert found even prettier in morning than in evening dress; which is saying a great deal. But then, her complexion and her colouring were her strong points, rather than her features or expression. She received him with a faint blush and with undisguised pleasure, prattling to him as to an old acquaintance. Presently the party adjourned to the stables to inspect Mr. Marshall's stud, walking two and two, Noah's Ark fashion, Sir Hubert bringing up the rear with his little hostess.

"Do you ride, Miss Marshall?"

"Oh, no. It's very silly, but I'm so nervous with horses. I suppose I lose a lot of fun!"

"Perhaps. But I'm not sure that the horsey young lady of the present day is not overdone. We can't get rid of her. She is always with us—in the stables, riding over us in the hunting-field, in the gallery at Tattersall's."

"Then you don't think I'm silly? I'm *so* glad! I'm always being told I ought to ride and drive."

"I think you're quite all right just as you are," replied Sir Hubert, his eyes echoing the admiration of his words, till Effie's fell before them, and she reddened.

The two did not linger long in the stables. Leaving the others in earnest discussion, bending down in the straw to feel this and that quadruped's legs, as each was stripped in succession, and, with a "Get h'over!" exhibited for inspection, they turned out of a side-door into the garden.

"What a chaos, isn't it? An autumn garden always seems so sad, such a wreck! These blackened geraniums, these overgrown tangled flower-beds! It makes one quite melancholy!" sighed Effie.

"You ought not to feel melancholy at your age," said her companion, looking at her sunny head and almost childish face.

"So papa is always saying—but I do often—I don't know why. One can't always explain one's feelings, can one? See, the last rose of summer! Have a button-hole, Sir Hubert?"

They were standing in a little rose-garden, under a south wall, and she plucked him a pale *gloire* bud.

"Thanks," he replied, settling it in his coat, and returning to her question. "No, one can't—like the *creepiness* we were talking of yesterday!"

Her face changed. A frightened look stole into her eyes.

"Ah! that night at Milverton Manor!" she gasped, shuddering.

"Milverton Manor?" repeated Sir Hubert, surprised, "Was your ghost at Milverton Manor?"

She nodded.

"Why, so was mine! How strange!"

"It was when I was staying there with a school friend, last May."

"Last May? It was May when I stayed the night there—it could not possibly be—it were too odd. Could you remember the date? I know it was the week before the Derby—a Thursday——"

"It *was* a Thursday, I *do* remember, because I had gone to spend Wednesday the 23rd, Clara's birthday. Thursday——"

"You walked in——"

"You sat in the chair——"

There was a moment's silence. Both stood stock still, looking at each other. Then Effie burst into an uncontrollable, almost hysterical, fit of laughter, in which Sir Hubert joined.

"Ha! ha! The rummiest thing I ever heard in my life! *You* were my ghost——"

"And you *mine!*" she cried. Then suddenly she grew grave, and drew a long breath. "Oh! you don't know! It's *such* a relief; it's haunted me, weighed upon me, all these months, like an evil dream. I could not get rid of the memory of that horrible night—I was quite ill for days after—that was how I never heard of your flying visit, I suppose?"

Sir Hubert grew grave too.

"I *am* so sorry to have been the cause; I am, indeed," he said, in a very concerned tone.

"Oh, never mind! It's all right now, and I shall never, never be frightened again. I am *so* glad it was *you!*" she cried, executing a little pirouette like a pleased child.

"What's the joke?" asked Bee Gillinghame's rather shrill voice, as the rest of the party came round the corner.

"Oh, papa, papa, only think!" cried Effie, running up to her father and clinging to him. "It's all cleared up, all explained—I feel *so* happy!"

"What is all explained?" asked Mr. Marshall of Sir Hubert.

"Our mutual ghost," replied the latter, and he told the story.

As he listened Mr. Marshall's brow cleared, and his face grew almost happy.

"Very well, then, my child," he said, patting his daughter's cheek. "That's all right, and we'll forget all about it," he added, turning to the other ladies. "Come into the house and have some tea."

But Effie shot a wicked glance at Sir Hubert behind her father's back.

"*I* shan't forget," she whispered shyly.

"Nor I," he replied in the same tone, feeling, somehow, oddly happy over the link which they had established between them.

They all went into the drawing-room to tea, and Miss Gillinghame was shown round the rooms and admired everything profusely—Mr. Marshall's old oriental china, his Japanese curios, his Indian draperies. Sir Hubert sat by Effie at the tea-table in the bow window which looked out across the lawn down to the river.

"How near Cerne looks from here," he remarked. "I can trace the avenue trees distinctly, and the Home Wood. Yet it is a long way round to drive."

"There is a short cut across the fields and over the river," said Effie. "I often use it to go to Studley Grange."

"Do you know Miss Aston, then?" asked Hubert.

"Know Marjorie? Indeed I do!" cried Effie joyously. "She's the greatest friend I have yet made down here. Somehow or other, the Miss Gillinghames—one's *so* old, and the other so——"

"Horsey?"

"Well, yes, but Marjorie—Marjorie Aston—is just so *nice*. She is so quiet, and restful, and soothing. Even if I have one of my headaches—and they *are* bad, you know, sometimes—Marjorie's mere voice seems to soothe it, and her soft brown eyes, that look into one, you know——"

"I have not seen Miss Aston since—since she wore short frocks and a pigtail. But she was always very sweet."

"So sympathetic! I'm just devoted to Marjorie. I often punt myself across the river and run over the fields to the Grange."

"A pleasant walk. Would you take me back that way? I will send the dog-cart home by the road——"

"And go and see Marjorie? *Do!* I've so often heard her talk about you!"

"Have you? She's not forgotten me?"

"Oh dear, no! Yes, certainly you shall go across the river and see Marjorie."

"Be taken by you, Miss Marshall? I do not think I have time to go and call at the Grange to-day. I have a man waiting to see me at home; it will save time if you will be so nice as to put me over the river."

And a quarter of an hour later Hubert found himself with Effie at the river seat. The autumn afternoon was drawing in. A mist was rising up the river; the rooks came clanging home, winging their way across the meadows to the Avenue at Cerne. Otherwise, the world was very still. The More, here broad and placid, between green pastures, flowed quietly on its way, fringed with yellow reeds. By the river seat, under the weeping willow, the grass was already brown and rank. Effie stepped into the punt and seized the pole.

"No, indeed," said Sir Hubert, taking it from her, and, pointing to the low seat at the far end, pushed off from the bank.

He punted idly, and ever so slowly. The sun had set imperceptibly in a hazy bank of grey clouds behind Cerne Hill, leaving a yellow glow in the west. The twilight deepened as the mist came up all round the horizon; the air was very still. A moor-hen darted across the stream, and a water-rat, with a sudden scurry and a splash, dived into the bank. Effie sat at the end of the punt prattling. But to Hubert Erle it seemed as if the end of the journey came all too soon.

Where a footpath from across the meadows reached the bank, he ran the punt up to the shore and jumped out, offering Effie a hand.

"Show me the way a bit, won't you?" said he.

"You don't pretend you've forgotten it?" she answered, with a toss of her head.

"Let us see," was his reply, as he tied up the punt, and they set off together across the misty meadows.

There is a certain stile, and when you have climbed, assisted, perhaps, as was Effie, by being jumped off the top rail, you find yourself in a lane between two rows of pollard willows. This leads up the hill and to Cerne village; a narrow path across the meadow to the right takes you to the farm-house known as Studley Grange.

It was while Effie was in the act of jumping from the top of the stile and of seizing Sir Hubert's outstretched hands as she alighted, that two figures turned the corner out of the latter path.

One was that of a clergyman, thin, smooth-shaven, long-coated, with clerical felt hat with cords. The other was that of a girl, tall and graceful.

Effie looked up with a glad cry of surprise.

"Marjorie?"

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

"After long years of pain."—TENNYSON.

"I THINK I must hurry on to the teachers' meeting," said the Reverend Edgar Adams rather constrainedly, as the four stood a moment together by the stile. "I hope to do myself the pleasure of a call in a day or two, Sir Hubert; but, just now, I really have not a minute——" and he hurried off down the lane, his long coat swinging about his legs.

"And I must make haste home before it gets dark," cried Effie to Sir Hubert and Marjorie.

Beyond a mere formal hand-shake and a muttered word or two, nothing had been said on either side, and it was to Effie Sir Hubert spoke.

"Let us see you to the punt."

"Yes," said Marjorie, "we will see you to the punt."

The meadow path was very narrow, and the edges of the grass deep and muddy. Sir Hubert walked behind, and the two girls, one so tall, the other so *petite*, in front. The latter did all the talking.

"To think of your turning up just now. And we had been talking about you, Marjorie," said the younger girl, passing her arm in that of her friend. "You dear thing! And I haven't seen you for an age; let me see, two whole days! Fancy! I've such a lot to tell you, haven't we, Sir Hubert? All about our dinner-party, last night, such a nice dinner-party, wasn't it?" turning round.

"*Very* pleasant," from behind.

"And then, oh, Marjorie, something wonderful has happened! She'll never guess, will she, Sir Hubert?" (laughing.)

"Guess what?"

"Why, about the ghost, the ghostesses—

'There were two ghostesses
Sitting on two postesses, etc. etc.'

—you know, Marjorie, ghosts, *the* ghosts, *our* ghosts, eh, Sir Hubert?"

"*Our* ghosts," he returned emphatically.

"That sounds very ominous," said Marjorie Aston, who had hardly spoken yet.

"Doesn't it? But it isn't, though——"

"Unless pleasantly ominous of our acquaintanceship," put in the young man behind.

"But it's too long a story to tell now. Come over to tea soon, will you, darling Marjorie, and we'll have a long chat."

"To-morrow afternoon is filled up," said Miss Aston, gravely looking down into the bright little face.

"And the day after we've a visitor coming. But one I want you to know. So come over and lunch, will you, there's a dear?"

"And me," put in Hubert, as he assisted her into the boat. "Now you've so kindly refreshed my memory about the short cut over the meadows, may I be allowed to use it?"

"Oh, yes, if you like," responded Effie, seizing the pole and pushing off.

"Oh, then I *shall* like!" he laughed. "But not for two or three days, worse luck; I've got to run up to London to see those wretched lawyers."

"HE JUMPED OUT, OFFERING EFFIE A HAND" (*p.* 551).

He lifted his hat, the punt shot away down stream, Effie nodding her head at them.

The two stood a few moments on the bank till the skiff had disappeared round a reach and was hidden by some willows.

"I must be going on," said Marjorie.

"The parson will be waiting," smiled Sir Hubert, as they turned up the path again. He swept a glance over the tall figure at his side.

"Why, Marjorie, I shouldn't have known you if I'd met you."

"Nor I you," she answered in a low voice, stealing a look at him.

"Old Nurse Merton's been telling me I've 'growed.'"

"It's so long ago since you went away."

"Seems so to you, does it? Well, what must it seem to me who knocked about so, so many changes—the Cape—Burmah—Malta—Egypt—here you seem all just the same way, except that everybody looks older. I begin myself to feel quite venerable. I suppose it is by comparison with that child. What a dainty little thing it is!"

"Effie's a sweet, dear, little girl! I'm very fond of her. She's so affectionate, so craving for sympathy."

"There is something very taking indeed about her besides her prettiness."

"She's very excitable, and not strong, I fear. She suffers so from headaches."

"She wants taking care of," decided Sir Hubert, with masculine superiority, "she's very frail, I should fear."

"I do all I can," said Marjorie, "but I can't see so much of her as I should wish. I am very busy—mother—the parish—"

"How is your mother, Marjorie?"

"Very much altered. She has grown quite old since father's death, and is often very ailing, it is not all fancy. She leans utterly on me."

"I can understand that. You're no broken reed, either, Marjorie. You always were sympathetic, you always did understand what people felt and wanted, you know."

Marjorie's pale face—she had too little colour—flushed with pleasure and her eyes sparkled at Sir Hubert's words. She did not speak, however, and they reached the stile. Marjorie was much taller than Effie and needed no assistance to mount it. She did not take Sir Hubert's proffered hand.

"And Bill," he asked, as they walked up the lane. "I have not inquired after Bill?"

"Bill is well, I believe, and happy, I trust. He's engineering in Brazil."

"How we're all scattered now, Marjorie. You and I seem the only two left."

"Yes, indeed," she answered, "the only two left."

There was another silence. Marjorie could not trust herself to speak, her heart was too full. The lane turned into a by-road and past a group of rather poor cottages, whence children ran out to bob a curtsey and pull a forelock at their new squire. Marjorie patted one grubby urchin on the cheek and inquired after its sick sister; then, as they pursued their way, she said timidly:

"Those cottages are dreadfully unhygienic, Mr. Adams thinks, Sir Hubert."

He looked up as if thinking of something else.

"Yes. What? I know, I know! I shall do up all the cottages on the estate. I've made up my mind to see about it. Some are in a shocking condition. But, listen, Marjorie, I was thinking—about a little lunch party, if Mrs. Perquisites will let me. (I've got *such* a new housekeeper, Marjorie, I'm awfully afraid of her.) I thought of asking Mr. Marshall and his daughter over, and will you come—I'll ask the new parson, too."

"I think you'll find Mr. Adams too busy for much society, and I don't know about my mother sparing me, Sir Hubert."

"Oh! nonsense, you must come, and look here, Marjorie," he continued; "pray don't 'Sir Hubert' me. Really, after all these years we've been friends—ever since we were children—it's too absurd."

It was getting quite dusk, and the road here was dark underneath the trees. He could not see her face as he looked across at her (the lane was muddy and she was walking some way from him) but she gave a little short laugh.

"Ah! we're not exactly children now, you see."

A baker's cart came tearing by at that moment, and separated them still further. Then the road turned into the village street, and lights began to glimmer in the cottage windows. He crossed over to her.

"You *will* come, won't you, Marjorie? You see it's easier for me to get Miss Marshall if there's another lady coming."

She caught her breath.

"Yes, I understand. It's easier for you to get Miss Marshall if I come. Very well, then."

They had reached the rectory gate, and Marjorie paused.

"This is where I am due at the teachers' meeting. Good-night," and she held out her hand.

"Good-night. I'll write when I've squared Mrs. Perquisites. She says she is not 'straight' yet. Good-night, Marjorie, and tell your mother I'm coming to see her when I return from London."

Marjorie opened the gate and turned into the familiar rectory garden. The new incumbent had turned the coach-house into what he called his "parish room," and which he used almost nightly during the winter months for various parochial gatherings. It was lit up now, and singing proceeded from it. But Marjorie turned in the opposite direction.

Though it was now almost dark, she knew her way perfectly among the garden paths where she had played as a child. She took one which wound round the lawn towards the shrubbery, the shrubbery where she and Bill had made hiding places in the past. She stopped at the corner where, under a lauristinus bush, a white stone gleamed in the gloom. She knew the inscription well, for had she not painted it with her own hands, years ago?

"TO SMUDGE,
"*Faithful and True.*"

But no one but herself had ever known all she had meant by those three words—"faithful and true," and never, till to-night, had she so realised their meaning.

"Faithful and true," she wailed to herself, standing still in front of the little tomb, and wringing her hands.

"'Faithful and true' I *have* been, and this is the end of it! He *has* come back—I have seen him—spoken to him—and the coming back is worse than the leaving! Ah! Smudge, dear old Smudge," she added, "there is more buried here than you!"

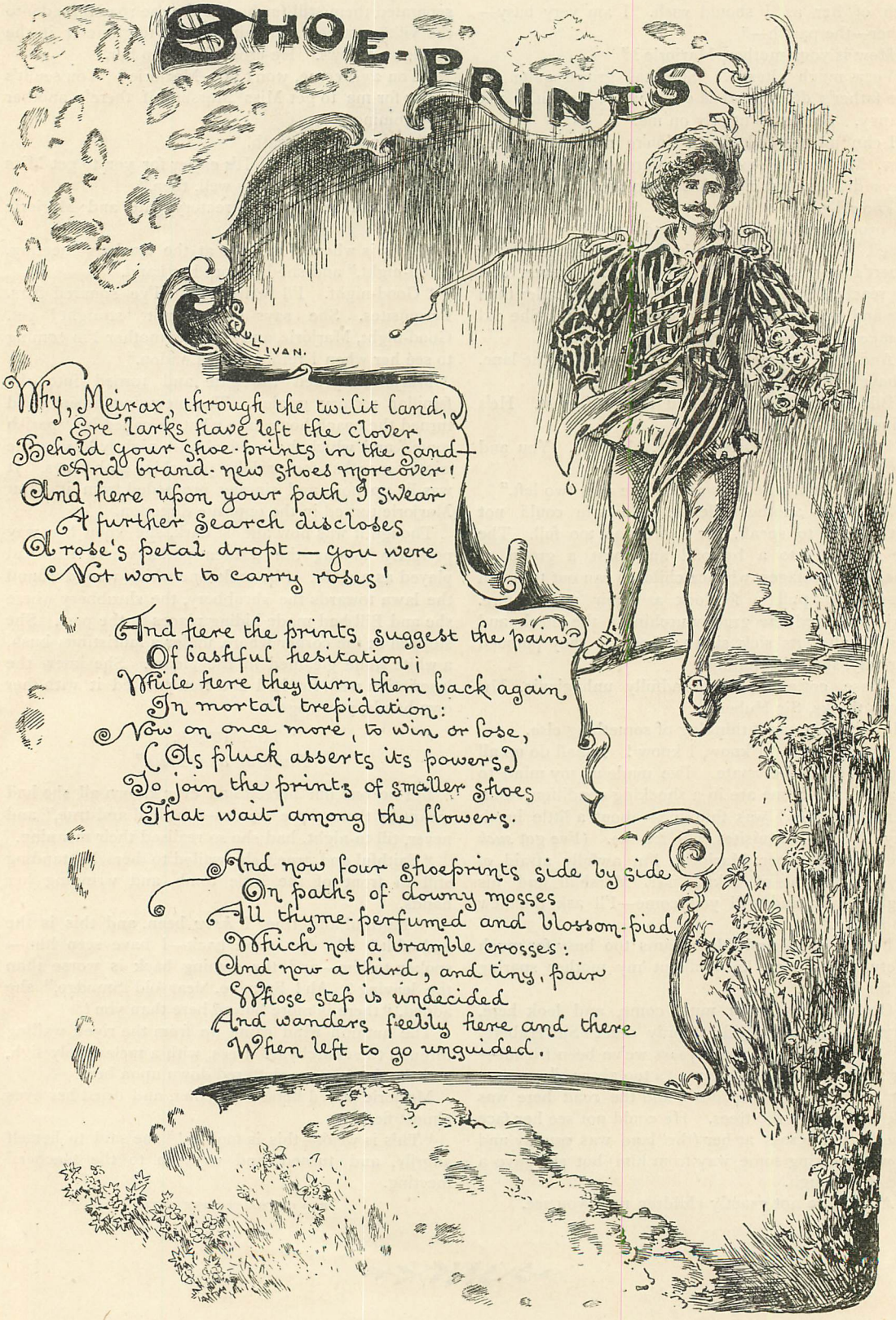
The autumn wind came up from the river, wailing through the churchyard trees, with a melancholy sigh, and the dead leaves fluttered down upon her.

Marjorie pulled herself together, and dried her eyes almost fiercely.

"This is weak—this is foolish!" she said to herself angrily, and turned and went in to the teachers' meeting.

END OF CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

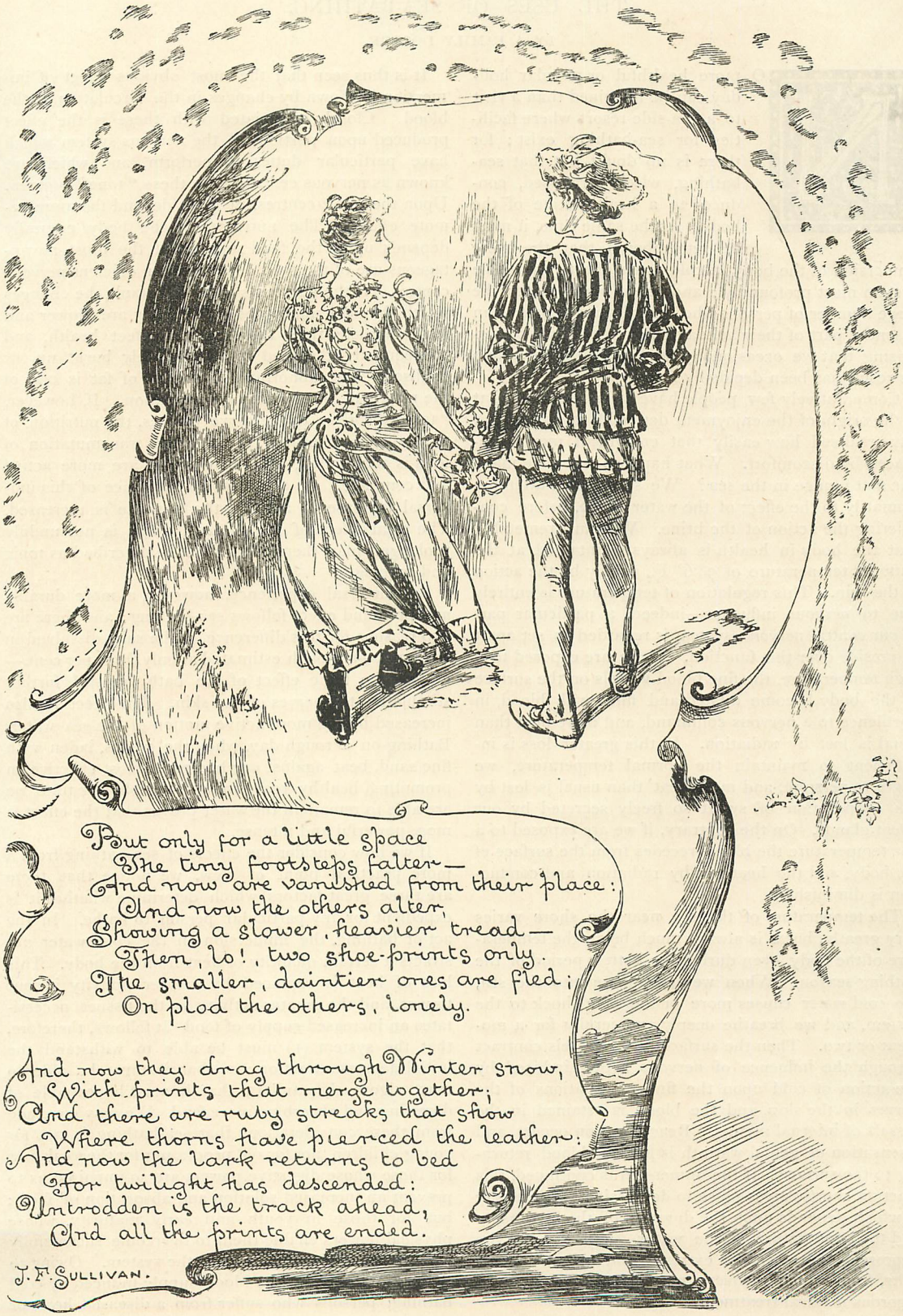
SHOE-PRINTS



Why, Meirax, through the twilit land,
Ere larks have left the clover,
Behold your shoe-prints in the sand—
And brand-new shoes moreover!
And here upon your path I swear
A further search discloses
A rose's petal dropt — you were
Not wont to carry roses!

And here the prints suggest the pain
Of bashful hesitation;
While here they turn them back again
In mortal trepidation:
Now on once more, to win or lose,
(Als pluck asserts its powers)
To join the prints of smaller shoes
That wait among the flowers.

And now four shoeprints side by side
On paths of downy mosses
All thyme-perfumed and blossom-pied,
Which not a bramble crosses:
And now a third, and tiny, pair
Whose step is undecided
And wanders feebly here and there
When left to go unguided.



But only for a little space
The tiny footsteps falter—
And now are vanished from their place:
And now the others alter,
Showing a slower, heavier tread—
Then, lo!, two shoe-prints only.
The smaller, daintier ones are fled;
On plod the others, lonely.

And now they drag through Winter snow,
With prints that merge together;
And there are ruby streaks that show
Where thorns have pierced the leather:
And now the lark returns to bed
For twilight has descended:
Untrodden is the track ahead,
And all the prints are ended.

J. F. SULLIVAN.

THE USES OF SEA-BATHING.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.

O more healthful or popular holiday can be imagined than a visit to a sea-side resort where facilities for sea-bathing exist; for there is no doubt but that sea-bathing, wisely practised, conduces to a healthy state of the body. At the same time, it must be remembered that the mere immersion of the body in cold water affects the whole system most profoundly; and when we consider the large number of persons who regard sea-bathing as an essential part of their holiday enjoyment, it is not surprising that we occasionally read of instances where its result has been decidedly injurious.

Comparatively few people have ever inquired what is the origin of the enjoyment derived from bathing, or have realised how easily that enjoyment may be replaced by discomfort. What happens when we make our first plunge in the sea? We shall direct attention primarily to the effect of the water alone, before considering the action of the brine. We must remember that the body in health is always maintained at the uniform temperature of 98·6° F., chiefly by the action of the skin. This regulation of temperature is entirely due to nervous influence—indeed, a particular part of our central nervous system is regarded as set apart to preside over this function. If we are exposed to a high temperature, the fine blood-vessels on the surface of the body become dilated and filled with blood, in obedience to a nervous command, and more heat than usual is lost by radiation. If this greater loss is insufficient to maintain the normal temperature, we begin to perspire, and more heat than usual is lost by the evaporation of sweat so freely secreted by our sweat-glands. On the contrary, if we are exposed to a low temperature the blood recedes from the surface of the body, and the heat lost by radiation and conduction is diminished.

The temperature of the sea near the shore varies very greatly, but it is always much below the temperature of the body, even during the hottest period of the bathing season. When we first plunge into the sea, the cold water causes more or less of a shock to the system, and we breathe deeply and jerkily for a moment or two. Then the surface blood-vessels contract through the influence of nervous action, induced by the action of cold upon the fine terminations of the nerves in the skin, and the blood is retained in the vessels of internal organs. Reaction soon occurs, and a sensation of genial warmth is felt, the blood returning to the surface. If the immersion is continued, this reaction shortly gives place to depression, the intensity of which depends upon the duration of the immersion and the temperature of the water. After a while the depression may become extreme, and exhaustion results, from which recovery may only be possible by vigorous medical treatment.

It is thus seen that the most obvious effect of immersion is shown by changes in the circulation of the blood. Closely associated with these is the effect produced upon portions of the nervous system which have particular duties to perform, and which are known as nervous centres. To these "tone" is given. Upon the nerve centres, in turn, depend the more remote effects. The nutrition of the body naturally depends upon the food supply, but the most advantageous use of the food depends upon efficient nervous control. If the nervous system is at fault, the changes which the food undergoes in the body are slower and less complete than they are in perfect health, and consequently the food is incompletely burnt up, or oxidised. The abnormal deposition of fat is one of the results of this incomplete oxidation. If, however, "tone" be given to the nerve centres, the nutrition of the body is improved, because the transmutation of food is accelerated, and the changes are more active and complete. As a natural consequence of this universal increase in activity, the appetite is increased. The total effect of a cold bath which is not unduly prolonged may therefore be briefly described as tonic and bracing.

By universal experience, however, a more durable and profound effect follows sea-bathing; and there are two reasons for this difference. The salts dissolved in sea water—although estimated at only three per cent.—add to the tonic effect of the bath by still further stimulating the nerves of the skin. The effect is also increased by the more active motion of the sea water. Bathing on a rough day, when the waves, laden with fine sand, beat against our bodies, is most effective in promoting healthy reaction, and the shorter time we are able to remain in the water proves that the effect is more powerful and intense.

If we now consider the effects of sea-bathing from a more practical point of view, we notice that there are three great factors which determine whether it is expedient for any particular person to bathe. In the act of bathing, the immersion in the cold water abstracts a certain quantity of heat from the body. This loss of heat is replaced by greater activity in our tissues, and the greater activity in the tissues necessitates an increased supply of food. It follows, therefore, that the system (1) must be able to withstand the initial depressant action; (2) that it must be able to react vigorously; and (3) that it must be capable of digesting and absorbing more food. We may conclude from these considerations that sea-bathing is not for young children, nor for old people, nor for the weak, nor for those whose digestive powers are so impaired as to prevent an increased solution and absorption of food; but for those in youth and early maturity, whose physical powers enable them to overcome successfully the greater strain thrown upon the system. Owing to the great changes in the blood supply induced by cold bathing, persons who suffer from a diseased heart or

a feeble circulation ought to abstain from bathing except under very special circumstances.

Certain precautions must, however, be observed even by the most robust. (1) If the body be in an overheated state, the sudden rush of blood to internal organs due to its displacement from the surface vessels may induce a "congestion," which may only be temporary, or which may if it reaches a certain intensity cause serious illness. (2) Bathing must not be indulged in immediately after a meal. During the reaction the blood is withdrawn from those organs which need a large supply for the due exercise of their digestive functions. (3) Nor after a too long abstention from food—for under these circumstances the reaction is apt to be delayed or feeble. (4) Another obvious precaution is to avoid remaining an inordinate length of time in the water. Reaction begins in from three to five minutes, and lasts a varying length of time, not often exceeding ten to fifteen minutes. It is well to leave the water before the reaction is succeeded by depression, for the secondary depression is more profound and lasting. Continuous motion of the limbs while in the water, as in swimming, diminishes the depression, and enables the immersion to be prolonged. Cramps are induced by a lengthy immersion, and the bracing of the system is replaced by exhaustion. The bather may then suffer from lassitude and fatigue for many hours. (5) Although cold bathing is most valuable for the proper hygienic care of the skin, yet persons with irritable skins or suffering from any skin disease would be well advised to abstain from sea-bathing.

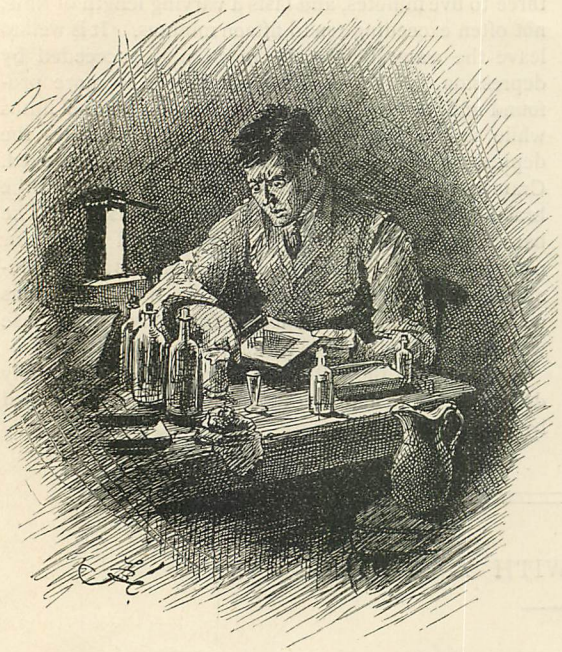
After leaving the water, the body should be carefully dried and well rubbed, and efficient reaction induced by immediate exercise.

MY STRUGGLES WITH A CAMERA.

"YES," I decided, after reading the florid description (in an advertisement) of the wonders accomplished by the "Clipper" camera, "evidently the one thing needful to make existence useful, profitable, and delightful is a photographic camera." As with the tempting occupations which offer to either sex a rare opportunity to increase their income, "no previous experience is necessary," and unparalleled results are obtained from the trifling exertion involved in pressing a button or touching a spring. That would just suit me. "And there is no occasion to purchase an expensive outfit," I mused, "when such brilliant successes can be achieved by the aid of these small affairs."

Within a few days I was the proud possessor of the "Clipper" camera, with plates, slides, hydrokinone, and other known and unknown (chiefly the latter) appurtenances thereunto belonging, and was off for a holiday to the Highlands. These not altogether unknown regions should live again in the hearts of Englishmen, and be further revived and beloved, when I gave my photographs to the world. I took a long and delightful excursion—it was worth while to incur a little expense for the sake of the scene I should by this means secure—and boldly held my camera up in front of one of the biggest mountains. As I had omitted to ascertain the manner in which photographs are usually taken, and had, in fact, no idea of the process, it was a fine opportunity to call common-sense into play. I did so, and decided, first of all, that by turning the broad end in which was the plate towards the mountain I gave the latter a much

"BOLDLY HELD MY CAMERA UP IN FRONT OF ONE OF THE BIGGEST MOUNTAINS."



"I LOOKED AND ROCKED, AND ROCKED AND LOOKED, IN VAIN."

better chance of immortality than if the small lens had been pointed at it. I drew out the paper Chinese-lantern arrangement which fixed the "focus," released the spring, and the thing was done—as easy as child's play! I ordered a meat tea instead of dinner at an early hour that evening, so that I might devote an unclouded intellect to the science of photography.

At last my arrangements were complete: the mysterious mixtures in the bottles were at hand, the "actinic" light was blown out, and I was left by the vague illumination of the ruby lamp to explore into the recesses of my camera, take out the plate, and place it, "film side upwards," in the dish. Then, with a beating heart, I deftly poured on the developer, and rocked the dish. I rocked assiduously, zealously; there could have been nothing more perfect in that line had I been a paterfamilias. I kept looking, as the directions enjoined, to see "the image appear gradually"; but I looked and rocked, and rocked and looked, in vain: my mountain never appeared at all. After a couple of hours of this sort of exercise, I left the plate to steep in the developer, and sought relaxation.

An acquaintance to whom I casually mentioned my *modus operandi* and singular lack of success, poured out on me a vast amount of advice. It is surprising from what an elevation a six months' possessor of a camera bestows counsel. However, I am not above accepting information, and I resolved, as my own way had failed, to give his a trial. Accordingly I sallied forth again; and this time I attacked a loch—with the lens, instead of the shutter-end, directed to it; and again I at night poured on fresh developer, and rocked. The result was more manifest, though scarcely more satisfactory: a heavy blackness settled on the plate, through which it was impossible to discover any "image" at all, except that of darkness visible.

The failure which attended the mode of procedure recommended by my friend was not such a severe blow as the failure I had experienced on my own account, and I resolved to give the theory another try. I was not going to be beaten by a machine 8 in. by 6 in.: I would try a "time exposure."

I did so. I tried a short-time exposure and a long-time exposure—from five seconds to five minutes, and so on to half an hour. I tried indoors and out-of-doors, shine and shade, animate and inanimate objects, and precisely the same result followed in all cases—or, rather, total lack of result. I consulted two other amateur photographers. It is very easy to obtain advice from the amateur, especially the amateur photographer, who is at large everywhere—the difficulty more often is to avoid it gracefully.

"Oh!" exclaimed Amateur Number One, taking up a plate (the one which I had, in desperation, exposed for half an hour), and holding it with a knowing air to the light, "easy to see what is the matter here—not sufficient exposure!" Amateur Number Two seized on another representation of darkness, blacker than I should have supposed anything could get in five seconds—indoors, too—with "By Jingo! over-exposed!"

My faith in the wisdom of my photographic friends was shaken. However, I had no objection to borrow the "Abracadabra" camera from them, and to follow their advice; returning my own, accompanied by a

MISS MERRIDEW.

THE PORTRAIT OF MISS MERRIDEW.

letter expressing more grief than anger, to the makers. The "Abracadabra" camera is a neat article, more important in appearance than my first experiment, and even simpler in its adjustments: a "fixed focus" is warranted to take anything, except the influenza. I carried it with me on one of those long excursions arranged in Scotland to keep you at it all day without letting you get away too far from your starting-place, by coach, steamer, train—steamer—train, coach—train, coach, steamer. The changes are rung *ad infinitum*. A charming girl displayed the utmost interest in my camera, which I exhibited to her with the *sang-froid*, I flattered myself, of an old hand. She was charmed when I confided to her that I was going to "take" the Craigkilochlochkilchree Falls. "Oh, would I give her a photograph? She so loved those Falls—they were so picturesque and all that!" I said I would if she would assist me in its production. (Of course I knew she could not help me, but it sounded polite.) She did not get so much in the way as I had feared, and after the supreme moment, about which, I verily believe, she was as anxious as I, and that is saying a good deal, we—— But this is beside the question. It made me, however, determined to succeed with this photograph. It would be a tender and appropriate memento of the day; and what a graceful *souvenir* it would be! I would, regardless of expense, get it silver-typed. How tenderly I drew out the slide that evening by the non-actinic light!—*she* had slid the shutter that morning! I slid it back now; but horror! where was the plate? I shook it—there was no answering rattle. Consternation! No plate had been inserted. I draw a veil.

Cool reflection next morning—I am of an eminently philosophic and reasonable turn of mind—convinced me that the omission of the plate could not be ascribed as a fault of the camera, and that therefore I should—particularly as it was borrowed—give it another try. I put Miss Merridew off with vague remarks about "toning" and "touching up" when she inquired after the Craigkilochlochkilchree Falls, and, to divert her attention, I said I would photograph her. She threw herself into a most graceful attitude, leaning against the heather-covered rocks, and I could not help exclaiming that she made a charming picture. After that I rocked and developed the plate, inspired anew. Rapture! At last my efforts were to be crowned with success: something—mysterious, vague enough, but still *something*—appeared. I persevered; irregular patches of light and shade could be descried, whilst the circle of the lens was distinctly visible. I could not discern anything definite, but, no doubt, that would come with the "printing" and "toning." I had a vague idea that on the negative objects appeared the reverse of what they were: the more reverse, the better—something was bound to turn up right in that case. I could not sleep that night. Miss Merridew must be somewhere on that slide!

Next morning I "printed"; but, alas! where were the rocks, and where was Miss Merridew? A light blank was, no doubt, the water; a fiery chocolate blank was, no doubt, the grassy foreground: was that a stone in the top left-hand corner, or could it be—yes, it was!—Miss Merridew's skirts! The remainder of Miss Merridew had got outside the "fixed focus," and disappeared.

I have come to the conclusion that photography offers a larger percentage of crushing blows and humiliating experiences than any other pursuit, and yet it has a fatal fascination which allures its victims. Now that the makers of the "Clipper" camera have sent me a new apparatus, with the explanation that a pin-prick in a vital part had been the cause of my failures with it, I shall probably renew the attack; but this time I shall pursue my dark investigations alone and in secret, and to mortal man—least of all to woman—shall never be revealed the failures and vicissitudes which I foresee must be my lot before I burst upon an astonished and admiring world as "Mr. Smith, the accomplished amateur photographer."

M. G.

DESPAIR

A DESPERATE VENTURE.

BY ANNIE E. WICKHAM. A STORY IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

E stepped ashore from the ferry-boat.

The quaint little fishing village lay peaceful and quiet under the afternoon sun of an autumn day.

Anthony Disney looked along the broad quay paved with rounded stones. A fisherman was mending his net at one end; at the other sat two men smoking and chatting, a crowd of barefooted children quarrelled and fought on the sharp shingle at the foot of the quay. The burning sun, the glittering sea beyond, the harbour-bar, the village running up the cleft of the well-wooded hill, the cottage doors thrown open, made a peaceful scene.

Anthony Disney looked at the luggage at his feet; it was a goodly pile. He turned to call the ferryman, but already the man was far out on the broad river. There was nothing for it but to walk the length of the quay to the mender of nets. It was a hot day, and Anthony was ruffled. He prided himself on his irreproachable dress, and he had waded in mud up to his knees from the ferry-boat to the quay slip—evil smelling mud, too. He had expected someone to meet him, his uncle or a servant, and there was no one. Altogether, he was thoroughly out of temper.

"Can you tell me the way to the Vicarage, my good man?" he said, with a distinct note of a superior addressing an inferior in his voice.

The west-country giant in the blue jersey turned and surveyed the questioner from head to foot. He spat on the stones, and continued his mending.

"Cannot you answer, my good fellow?" said the gentleman, impatiently.

"What do 'ee want up to passon's?" asked the young giant, with a keen glance from light blue eyes.

"That is my affair."

The two men from the opposite end of the quay sauntered up to hear what the "Lunnon chap" wanted with Bill Easterbrook.

"Be 'ee goin' up to passon's?" inquired one of the two worthies.

"Yes. Where can I get a carriage to take my luggage?"

"Lor! a carriage!" said Bill Easterbrook, and the other two chuckled.

"Will you two men carry my luggage, then? I will pay you well," said Anthony, desperately.

But they laughed again, and slouched away. The quay was alive by now. The population of the place had gathered, drawn by instinct, to witness the discomfiture of a "furriner." At every open door stood a woman, heads were pushed from cottage windows.

Anthony was furiously angry. He put on his most insolent air; and, with a wave of his white, many-ringed hand, threaded his way through the growing crowd back to where his luggage lay on the quay.

"Look at his frilled shirt!"

"'Ee thinks Solomon in all his glory nought to 'ee."

"My! how doth 'ee get into his clawths? Look how tight they be."

"'Ee b'aint a bad-looking chap, nuther."

"Bill Easterbrook don't like 'ee goin' up to passon's."

There was a general laugh at this.

"He'th a coom for iver and iver by his loogage."

Disney seated himself on a portmanteau; only laughter greeted him when he inquired the way. He lit a cigar, and smoked with what he hoped was an irritating indifference to this *canaille*. They surged and gathered round him, with laughter and jeers in a broad west-country dialect, apparently blind to his air of haughty insolence. One man only among the crowd grew savage at their failure to bait the "furriner"—the fair-haired, blue-eyed giant. He shouldered his way from where he had been standing at the edge of the crowd, into the rank nearest Disney, and, with an intentional kick of his foot, sent one of the portmanteaux against Disney's leg.

"If you do that again, I will knock you down!" said Anthony, curtly.

Bill Easterbrook was the village champion. He eyed the slighter man's make contemptuously, and gave the portmanteau a second and heavier kick.

Anthony leapt to his feet, and gave the young giant a well-planted blow between the eyes—a blow which sent him staggering backwards among the crowd. "Ah! I'm in for it now!" muttered Anthony, as the crowd made a ring round the two men, and shouted for a fair fight.

He felt an utter fool as he pulled off his fine coat and prepared for the fray. He had no fears of the result. In those days every gentleman could box, and Disney was counted as equal to the best professionals in the noble art. But to fight with a common fisherman in broad daylight on an open quay, with a mob of roughs looking on, was not at all in Disney's line. This was what came of travelling to uncivilised regions. London, Bath, and Paris were the only possible places for a man of taste.

"If 'ee gets mauled, us'll finish 'im for 'ee!" was the cheering sentiment he heard expressed by the crowd to Bill Easterbrook.

The giant came with a rush at his despised adversary, to be sent reeling back with a bleeding nose. But if Easterbrook had not science he had courage. Again and again he threw himself on Disney with a blind rashness which Anthony admired and pitied. How much more interesting would have been the bout if Easterbrook had known even the rudiments of the science. Twice Bill went down,

"THE WOMAN PUSHED HER WAY THROUGH THE CROWD."

and the crowd began to mutter and use threats against the "furriner." Anthony was thinking that the worse part of the fight would be when Easterbrook was finished. That was not far off now, judging by his looks, when a clear, hard voice on the outskirts of the crowd demanded to know what was happening.

At that precise instant Easterbrook was giving his final rush, and Anthony gave him one in the forehead which laid him senseless on the stones of the quay. There was an immediate rush towards Anthony, and among the fists clenched at him he saw two or three ugly knives. It would have gone hard with him if that clear voice had not called the men by their names and ordered them to put away their knives.

"'Tis passon's lass," said one of the women who had watched the fight with equal interest to the men.

Anthony Disney's frilled shirt was torn from wrist to shoulder, his beaver had been kicked over the quay when he had placed it on the ground, and his dark hair, ruffled by the fray, waved and curled over his broad forehead. He looked a boy as he tossed his hair back, his face flushed, his eyes shining with anger and annoyance.

The woman who pushed her way through the crowd to the fallen man's side looked with scorn at Disney's fine, well-fitting clothes, his elaborate shirt and the laced coat he dragged on with careless *sang-froid* on the ending of the fight.

"What is all this?" she demanded in her hard, clear voice; "Bill Easterbrook fighting again!"

She gave Easterbrook a contemptuous push with her foot, which, Disney noticed, was as pretty a foot as he had ever seen.

"Ball," she turned to one of the men, "get some water and bathe Bill Easterbrook's face and take him home. I am ashamed of you attacking Mr. Disney in this way."

"Two of you carry Mr. Disney's luggage to the vicarage. I am Dorothy Disney," she continued abruptly, turning towards Anthony. "I am sorry you have been attacked like this. I intended to meet you but the servant met with an accident, and I had to bind up her hand."

She spoke stiffly, coldly.

He bowed with a murmured thanks.

"We are savages here," she said, as they climbed the steep street leading from the quay to the vicarage. "I was afraid they might rush at you and knock you down. I could have done nothing then."

He was beginning a compliment when she cut him short.

"You will not be safe in the village with those rings on your fingers unless my father or I should be with you. Hardly then. It would be safer for you to take them off," she said with a glance at his white hands.

"I will, when I wander unprotected about this uncivilised place."

He looked at her as they climbed the hill. She was twenty-eight, with a clear-cut face and dark blue eyes, pale complexion, and hair that we now call golden, which was then called red. She was taller than was

the fashion for women to be in 1817, and her tightly-clinging dress made her look even taller than she really was. That generation looked on Dorothy Disney as a plain maypole of a woman, and she had accepted that verdict and long ceased to trouble over it.

Anthony Disney came to pretty nearly the same conclusion about his cousin's claims to beauty as he glanced at her on their walk to the vicarage. She was wearing a red handkerchief knotted round her head instead of a bonnet, her hands were bare, and she wore sleeves to her rough, dark blue dress instead of the long wrinkled gloves reaching to the shoulders, which were the fashion.

"You will not be amused here," she said, when they paused to draw breath after the steep ascent.

He was thinking the same himself, but he assured his cousin that he foresaw a delightful time.

She treated his words with a shrug of her shoulders and an indifferent smile.

They passed through a small wicket-gate into a garden with some fine old trees, surrounded by a low wall, which separated the vicarage garden from the churchyard.

A girl in a bright pink frock ran towards them from the open door of the low white vicarage building.

"My half-sister, Georgiana, Mr. Disney," said Dorothy. Georgiana giggled and smiled with bold, black eyes and pink cheeks that matched her frock.

"I thought you would be killed; I had to run away when I saw you were fighting. I was vastly frightened," she said in a voice that had more than a suspicion of provincial accent. "Dorothy went on; she has no nerves, but I ran back home and buried my head in the cushions of the couch."

"To think that you have pitied me, consoles me for what I have gone through," he said, with a bow and a smile.

Dorothy passed on to the house and the other two followed. She could hear Georgiana's little screams of horror at Anthony Disney's description of the fight, and could fancy the clasped hands and upturned eyes which greeted his travestied account. At the hall-door she stopped, and said in a curt voice:

"Georgiana, father is in the library; take Mr. Disney to see him."

The room called the library had its walls covered with books, but the master of them was not engaged in study. He was lying back in an arm-chair comfortably asleep, an empty glass at his elbow and a suspicious smell of whiskey in the room.

"Father!" said Georgiana, in a sharp voice.

He awoke, and looked for a second confusedly at Anthony. The next moment he had risen to his feet, benevolence and welcome written on his fine face.

"Anthony, my boy, delighted to see you! We expected you an hour ago. I should have met you on the quay, but I had a headache, and thought it hardly prudent to venture into the burning sun. I sent Dorothy and my little rosebud to welcome you. A pretty girl is more in your line than an old fellow such as I am. I hear you are a sad dog with the women, eh?" He poked Anthony in the ribs, giving a knowing wag of his white beard.

Georgiana giggled.

Anthony told the story of his delay with many interruptions from his listeners.

"I must reprimand them," said the old clergyman; "but they are a fine set of men, Anthony. You will like them when you know them better. I will show you your room now; you will want a little brushing up before supper. You will find us primitive, but we will do our best to make you comfortable."

The room allotted to Anthony was large and low. From the lattice-windows he could see across the churchyard to the bar and the open sea. A ragged bit of coast ran beyond the harbour-bar to the west. On the opposite side of the broad mouth of the river stretched low sandhills, ending in a pebbly beach. The sun was low in the horizon, turning the sea into molten gold, tinging the small clouds with orange. Anthony Disney looked at the scene with an artist's eye.

He painted better than most amateurs, and he loved the art. This was why he had accepted his unknown great-uncle's invitation to Lee; that he might sketch in the beautiful neighbourhood.

A cracked bell summoned him to supper. A place was laid for him by Georgiana's side, Dorothy sat at the head of the table, her father on her right, her sister on her left. She ate her supper in silence, seemingly deaf to the stories her father was telling. Georgiana cried "Shocking," and stopped her ears with giggles and pretended blushes, which were far worse than silence could have been. The old man's stories waxed broader as his potations grew deeper, and Anthony was relieved when Dorothy, ordering her unwilling sister to follow, left the room. He found Georgiana in the garden when, his uncle having fallen asleep, he stepped into the cool, dusky, sweet-scented garden.

Georgiana was quite ready to stroll by his side while he smoked a cigar; she proposed it herself, her bold, black eyes on his.

"Dorothy has gone into the village to see Bill Easterbrook, the man you knocked down. She is angry with you for having done it."

"Is the man a particular favourite of hers?"

"I should just think so," with a spiteful laugh; "she pretends to treat him like dirt, but I know she don't. Dorothy is an ugly name, don't you think, Mr. Disney?"

"*Mr.* Disney! You called me cousin," he said, half-banteringly.

"Cousin, then," she murmured, with a glance that was meant to be coquettish, but was only bold.

He looked at the girl as she plucked a rose with an affected air. Her stout figure and coarse red arms were ill-adapted for the clinging, fashionable dress of the day. She turned her head with an ogling look, which choked Anthony with laughter, and made him bend his head to see an imaginary glow-worm.

They walked on again, Georgiana slipping her hand in her cousin's arm.

"No one understands me here," she murmured in his ear. "Dorothy hates me. She is jealous, nasty old thing, because I get all the attention. She thinks she is much better than I am, because her mother's people are grand. They won't ever have anything to do with her, though, and I don't wonder. Ain't she ugly?"

"We must not draw comparisons between the sisters," said Anthony with a gallant air.

Georgiana was pleased; she considered his speech a compliment.

"She is twenty-eight, an old maid. Fancy not being married when you are twenty-eight! Father says the men were always afraid of her, red-headed maypole."

Anthony changed the conversation.

He kissed her hand before they entered the house; he might have kissed her lips if he had chosen—she would not have objected.

A dark figure flitted past them in the dusk.

"Dorothy—back from seeing Bill Easterbrook," said Georgiana, with a spiteful laugh.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

DOROTHY went to her bedroom, and, opening the window, looked out on the dusky, late summer night. She heard her sister's voice as she came in from the garden, followed by Anthony Disney, and her lip curled as she remembered the kiss she had seen imprinted on her sister's hand.

She was tired and worried. Had all her efforts to humanise the village been in vain? The fishermen had attacked and, but for her appearance, might have killed this cousin—this fine gentleman, Anthony Disney. Easterbrook who was the fisherman most obedient to her orders, had been the first to attack the stranger. He had listened to her scornful words in sullen silence this evening when she visited his cottage to upbraid him.

The first days that followed Anthony's arrival were uneventful ones. The scenery in the neigbourhood was magnificent, and Anthony, Georgiana accompanying him, sketched the whole day. He could willingly have dispensed with his cousin's company; her ignorant remarks and demands on his attention were unceasing and hindered his work. He hinted as much at supper one evening, but only Dorothy understood; he saw her smile.

She repelled him. Her clear, hard voice, and cool, stern glance, were not womanly. He liked a woman who would cling to him, and lean upon his strength—not one who trod her own path, and never asked for a helping hand.

He began a picture of the garden, and found that Dorothy, in her rough, blue dress, her hair blown about under the red handkerchief, made a picturesque figure. He sketched her without her knowing it, as she sat one afternoon on the low wall dividing the garden from the churchyard.

"You are never putting that old thing into a picture," said Georgiana in a piqued voice behind him.

"You see I am!"

"La! fancy an old woman in a picture! Dorothy, he's painting you."

Dorothy rose, and walked to where Anthony and her sister stood looking at the sketch.

"You ain't a bit like that," said Georgiana, rudely, "he's made you pretty and young."

Anthony looked at Dorothy covertly, to see how she bore her sister's allusion to her age. No shadow of anger or annoyance crossed her face. She looked at the sketch and said:

"Yes, you have made me look younger," then she left them and entered the house.

At supper that evening Anthony was the witness of a fight between the wills of the father and Georgiana with Dorothy.

"Where did the rug in your room come from, father?" she asked, sternly frowning.

Mr. Disney shuffled in his seat uneasily and coughed.

"I—I—bought it, my dear."

"Someone gave it to you—who?"

He quailed before his daughter's stern glance.

"Jem Ball gave it to him, Dorothy, and he means to keep it. You shan't make him return it, as you have other things!"

Dorothy ignored her sister's interruption.

"If Jem Ball gave it to you, father, you will return it."

"Why should I return it?" he said, peevishly, "it keeps the draught from my feet and I am not as young as I was. I can't afford to buy one myself with you to keep, and——"

"You know why you must return it, father. If you will not, I shall."

"Is it not hard upon me, nephew, that I may not keep a present from one of my parishioners?" said Mr. Disney, turning to the young man.

"You *shall* keep it, father," said Georgiana, passionately, eyeing her sister with a daring glance. "You *shall* keep it."

"He will not."

A storm of threats, of imprecations, of abuse, were showered on Dorothy's head after that firm, steady answer.

Anthony strolled into the garden and left them to it. His sympathies were with the father and younger sister; if they wished to keep Jem Ball's present, why should they not?

He had not the slightest doubt whose the victory would be. Georgiana's loud passion and his uncle's weak lamentations were like bits of straw before the strong, even current of Dorothy's will. Georgiana's voice, in shrieking hysterics, came through the open window of the dining-room; a second later Dorothy stepped from the house, a flush on her cheeks, a large bundle under her arm.

"So you have won," he said, walking by her side, "and you are carrying off the spoils of victory."

"Yes, I am taking the rug back to Jem Ball."

"Why do you not allow your father to keep it?"

"There is no reason why I should tell you why he is not to keep it," she said, impatiently. "You need not come with me to the village."

"You cannot carry that bundle. If you have resolved to deprive your father of it and to return it to Jem Ball, whoever he may be, I will carry it for you."

She chafed at his tone of voice, but the bundle was heavy and she was tired. She allowed him to take it from her and in silence they walked down the steep, narrow street of the little fishing village.

"This is it," she said, stopping before the door of one of the bettermost cottages and knocking. She entered without waiting for an answer, followed by Anthony.

Three men smoking and a woman knitting a jersey were in the room. The men stared at Dorothy without rising or removing their pipes.

"Jem Ball," she said, addressing the darkest, most sullen-faced man, "I have brought you back the rug you gave my father," she took it from Anthony as she spoke and threw it at the man's feet. It partly unrolled, and, to Anthony's astonishment, an Eastern rug of beautiful hues lay before them.

"I have forbidden you to give him anything and you have broken your word, Jem Ball. Remember, I have you in my power! I know who——" she looked significantly at the evil-faced man.

He shivered and cursed under his breath, with ugly looks at the tall woman in the doorway.

"Take your rug; my father shall not have it!"

She closed the door and turned to go back to the vicarage.

"That was a splendid bit of Persian work," said Anthony when they were half-way up the hill, "where did the man get it? Do you think he would sell it?"

"You can ask him," she said drily.

In the shadow of the vicarage trees a man advanced towards them.

"I've come to see 'ee, Miss Dorothy, and to beg your pardon. I ain't seed 'ee for a week—and I couldn't bear it longer," his voice dropped at the last words.

"Bill Easterbrook! Have you come to your senses at last? You must beg this gentleman's pardon, not mine."

"I shan't ever beg his pardon," said the giant.

"You will not have anything more to do with me, then."

She passed on, and Anthony was following when Easterbrook gripped his arm.

"Curse 'ee," said the giant savagely, "'tis all your doing. I'll be even with 'ee yet."

Anthony laughed.

"I have nothing to do with Miss Disney."

"Ah! you say that! You can't be running after Georgiana: her ain't your sort; you're too much of a fine gentleman to look at her, I reckon, and——"

Anthony freed himself from the man's grasp.

"Leave the Miss Disneys' names alone," he said, and walked on.

He bought the rug—the cause of war—from Jem Ball and presented it to his uncle who accepted it with lavish thanks. Georgiana was victoriously radiant; she twitted her sister on every occasion with their

"'THIS WOULD FIT ME,' SHE SAID, "IF I WENT'" (*p.* 565).

having, after all, acquired the rug. Dorothy said nothing, but she stood more aloof from her family than before, and refused to sit for her cousin that he might finish his sketch.

When in the house she kept almost entirely to her room, looking down at her cousin and Georgiana in the garden with what she told herself was vast disdain. He was such a finicking, fine gentleman with his useless white hands covered with rings, his spotless, ruffled linen and well-fitting clothes.

She would walk to her glass and look in it marking the small lines about her mouth and eyes. She was an old woman—or, at least, an old maid—and she had never cared for anyone since her mother died nearly twenty years ago, when she was nine years old.

In the garden below she could hear Georgiana's loud voice saying:

"Dorothy never had a beau and she won't have one at this time of day except——" and she stopped and laughed.

Dorothy frowned and paled.

"Except Bill Easterbrook. He's mad about her!"

Dorothy started. Bill Easterbrook in love with her! How dared Georgiana say such a thing! To Anthony Disney of all men! She closed her lattice-window that she might hear no more.

"Aunt Yeo hopes you'll come to her party, Dorothy," said Georgiana carelessly one evening at supper. "I told her you thought yourself too fine, but she said she'd be glad to see you all the same. Cousin Anthony is going; ain't you?"

Mrs. Yeo was an aunt of Georgiana's, married to a small farmer in the neighbourhood.

Dorothy murmured that she did not think she would go. Perhaps she hoped that one of the three others might beg her to accompany them.

"What a fool I am," she said, pacing her bedroom that night. "I never have been to the Yeos, I shall not go now. I am twenty-eight and he looks on me as an old woman. I am not even good-looking. He said he must go next Monday, and this is Tuesday, five more days—and this party is on Thursday."

She opened a hanging cupboard and lifted down a white brocade, her mother's wedding-dress.

"This would fit me," she said, "if I went."

She did go. She came down when it was nearly time to start, a long black cloak and hood drawn over her dress and bright hair.

"Do you mean to wear that necklace, Georgiana?" said Dorothy.

Anthony had noticed that ruby necklace; he wondered how it came to a country vicarage.

"I do," and Georgiana tossed her head.

But there was an uncomfortable look on her face and she quailed beneath her sister's eye.

They walked to Mrs. Yeo's farm. It stood on a high point overlooking the sea about half a mile from Lee. They were late but the company had not sat down to supper, they waited for the Vicarage people.

Anthony handed his elder cousin into supper; there was no other man present among the rough company who dared to offer his hand to "passon's darter." Bill Easterbrook was one of the guests. Georgiana was greeted with shouts of her christian name: she was in her element and amongst her own people. Anthony could not but be amused with the manners and customs of those around him. For the first time he really talked to Dorothy and he was astonished at the sense and spirit of her remarks. Perhaps the fact that she was looking her best helped him to appreciate her mind. She was flushed and smiling, her eyes a deeper blue and her face alive with animation and interest. The white brocade became her, and the lines of her bare neck and shoulders were beautiful.

Bill Easterbrook saw it all and cursed and swore beneath his breath.

Country dances in the barn commenced and the fun, which had been rough during supper, became uproarious as the evening progressed. Kisses and slaps were exchanged with noisy laughter and drunken lurches. Georgiana was first and foremost in the sport, the flowers torn from her dress, her hair falling about her shoulders.

"I am going," said Dorothy, a calm, white figure, among the noise and tumult.

"I will come with you. I am tired of this. Georgiana will find someone to bring her home," said Anthony.

Mr. Disney was drinking heavily, and was in no state to walk.

"Mrs. Yeo will send him home to-morrow," said Dorothy, with scorn in her voice as she looked at her father's rolling head and heard his maudlin tones.

They stepped into the fresh air from the heated, steaming barn. The night was overcast.

"There will be a storm," said Anthony.

"I hope not, I hope not," she cried, with unnecessary vigour, and she looked with anxious eyes across the dark sea to the darker sky.

"The wind is rising," he said, carelessly, and they walked on.

She counted how long that short walk should take, but she never slackened her footsteps nor lagged one moment that she might prolong it. She grew silent when he drew her hand within his arm, but he was in a talkative humour, and never noticed her silence.

They were nearly at the village when a dark figure stopped them.

"Bill Easterbrook!" said Dorothy, stepping forwards and dropping her cousin's arm.

"Ay, Bill Easterbrook. I've followed 'ee to tell 'ee that I'll be revenged on that fine gentleman for stealing 'ee from me!"

"You forget yourself!"

"Ay, you may draw your skirts together and look down on me. I know I b'aint good enough for passon's darter to touch, as you've showed me to-night. Since 'ee's come you've not spoken to me: you've thrown me over, and I'll be revenged. Mark my words, I'll have revenge. I've telled Jem Ball I'll join him and the rest. I'm to be the one to set light to the beacon next time." He staggered away into the gloom and darkness of the night.

"Curse the fellow's impertinence," said Anthony, angrily; "what did he mean by saying he would light the beacon?"

"They are wreckers," she said bitterly; "we are all wreckers in Lee!"

"I might have guessed," Anthony thought to himself, as he followed her into the vicarage dining-room.

She lighted the candles, and threw back her hood.

"We all live on wrecks here," she said; "there is a false light burnt to draw the ships from their course; they mistake the lights for those two miles down the coast, which they have to sail between to be safe. This is a dangerous shallow shore, the ships run aground, and the breakers knock them to pieces. The village picks up what it can from the wrecks; if any of the sailors are found alive—oh! I dare not think, I dare not think!"

She wrung her hands together.

"This pipe, I have seen you admiring it, came from a wreck—so did the rug Jem Ball gave my father. The necklace my sister wears was taken from a drowned woman's neck, and she ——. If they were not afraid of me, this house would be full of things taken from the poor drowned people."

Her face was bitter with shame and anger.

"Are there no magistrates or coastguards?"

"They killed the last coastguard; the present one thinks it safer to be blind to what goes on. My father is the only magistrate within ten miles; you know what he is."

She paced the room with wild steps, her long black cloak flung back from her shoulders.

"They are devils," she said, pausing in her walk and looking at him, "when they are once aroused. You would not believe if I told you the tales I have heard."

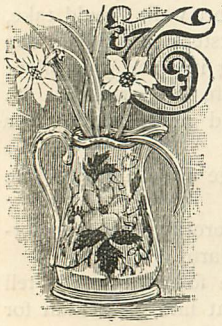
"You ought to leave this place," he said, holding her hand. "After that insolent man's words, among such savages it is hardly safe for you to remain."

"Where can I go?"

"We must arrange, you shall not stay here," he said, masterfully.

END OF PART THE FIRST.

SOME CURIOSITIES OF OLD GARDEN BOOKS.



THE literature of the garden, if the expression may be allowed, is extensive and varied. I am not now speaking of the modern literature on the subject, but of those more rare and less generally known works which were produced in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries on the subject of horticulture. A perusal of some of these works is a very instructive study, and gives us no slight insight into the customs and manners of the times.

In the first place, one cannot fail to be struck with the many odd conceits and notions which prevailed in the minds of the writers. For example, some of the early manuals on gardening reveal the fact that their authors were not unaffected by the opinions so rife at the time as to the effect of the planets and their conjunctions on human affairs. There is, for instance, a small octavo MS. still in existence, dating from the fifteenth century, which is one of the oldest works on gardening, and a perusal of its few pages will show how strong was the belief of the compiler in astrological influences. With a perfectly grave face he gives minute instructions as to the operations which ought to be conducted under certain signs of the zodiac, as being propitious seasons for the purposes of grafting and pruning. Nor, again, can one help smiling at the oddities they recommend. Here is one taken from the MS. just mentioned which I find quoted in a comparatively recent work on garden literature: "Also for to make that a pearl, or a precious stone, or a farthing, or any other manner of thing be found in an apple, take an apple or a pear, after it has flowered and somewhat waxen, and thrust in hard at the bud's end, which one thou wilt of these things aforesaid, and mark well the apple that thou dids't put in the thing, whatever it be."

Perhaps the most interesting of all the early works on gardening are those of the celebrated Lord Chancellor Bacon, whom the satirist Pope describes in the following terms:

"The wisest, brightest, *meanest* of mankind."

One of his celebrated essays is entitled "Of Gardens," and is well worth an attentive perusal, not for the information it contains (for the gardener of to-day would ridicule many of his favourite proposals), but because it is a remarkable testimony to the versatile genius of a man who, occupying a high social position, engaged in state and legal business, could yet devote some portion of his valuable time to an essay on horticulture. Moreover, from this work we may see what his own garden was like, and learn something of the experiments which were carried out there under his immediate supervision. Thus, we gather that the form of garden to which he was most partial was the square form, and he would have it "encompassed on all the four sides with a stately arched hedge, the arches to be on pillars of carpenter's work, of some ten feet high and six feet broad, and the space between of the same dimensions with the breadth of the arch." He liked to see a garden adorned with a fountain, but he had a horror (as who has not who really loves Nature in all her beauty?) of fantastic devices and shrubs distorted into all sorts of unnatural forms. He also approved of part of the garden (some six acres, his plans being adapted only for large estates) to be laid out as "a natural wilderness," to comprise such subjects as violets, strawberries, primroses, and other simple roots. "I like also," he says, "little heaps in the nature of molehills (such as are in wild heaths) to be set some with wild thyme, some with pinks, some with germander. . . ."

Bacon's other horticultural work, his *Sylva Sylvarum* was not published till a year after his death, in 1627. He has here a good deal to tell us as to the various kinds of pruning and grafting, and many of his suggestions are in full force to-day.

There were many popular superstitions rife at the time when Bacon wrote as to the mutual sympathy and antipathy of plants. That some plants thrive better and some worse in certain positions is, no doubt, true enough, but the Chancellor ridicules the notion of there being any such things as sympathy or the reverse between them as (indeed they were) "idle conceits."

One more fact should be noted with regard to the learned lord, and that is that he had a large share in laying out the grounds of the Inn of which he was so conspicuous a member. Much of the ground obtained through his instrumentality for this purpose still remains, but modern buildings have greatly narrowed the site.

"Physic-gardens" are institutions wholly unknown to us in these days, but judging by the accounts of them in the early writers, they were highly approved by them. They were, as the name denotes, plots of land set apart for the cultivation of herbs and plants famous for their medicinal virtues. Amongst those to which especial attention was paid were lavender, aniseed, camomile, and our old nursery friend, the rhubarb. Peppermint was also largely grown, but principally for the purpose of distilling a liquor from it; in the close of the eighteenth century upwards of one hundred acres were devoted to it. Evelyn mentions in his amusing diary that on the 12th of July, 1654, he went to inspect a physic-garden, and he notes as a great curiosity the now common "sensitive plant." He tells us that he also saw olive-trees, canes, and other plants in cultivation. The most celebrated physic-garden was at Chelsea. It had not only plants in the open air, but there were greenhouses in which tender subjects were grown. This garden is not of any great antiquity. It was rented, I believe, and laid out by the Apothecaries' Company in 1673, and eventually became their property by gift. Here also came Evelyn in 1685, and he tells us that he saw there a number of rare annuals, and the tree bearing Jesuit's bark, which had done such wonders in cases of quartan ague. But that which pleased him most was "the subterranean heat, conveyed by a stove underneath the conservatory, all vaulted with brick, so as he has the doors and windows open in the hardest frosts, excluding only the snow." We afterwards learn that the keeper of this physic-garden was removed from his post: a fact not to be wondered at if these were the lines on which he worked.

From these early accounts we also learn much as to the prices of vegetables which obtained in those days. Many things, such as parsley, onions, garlic, beet-roots, lettuces, and green peas, were well known, but for some of them the most exorbitant prices were asked and paid. Hazlitt, in his charming book on the literature of the garden—a book always to be read with pleasure and profit—tells us that an entry under "The Privy Purse Expenses of King Henry VII. in May, 1496," notes that there was paid "to a man for a present of pescoddes (green peas) 3s. 4d." This was equivalent to £1 of our money. In another place we read that at a public dinner the sum of 3s. was charged for two cauliflowers, which would be about 9s. of the present currency. Many other vegetables were proportionately high in price.

It was not till many years after its introduction that the potato became largely used among the masses. Gerarde, the herbalist, citizen and surgeon of London, whose book was published in 1597, had some in his garden in Holborn, and in his "Herbal" he gives an illustration of one. From many indications we gather that a long period elapsed before the humble tuber ceased to be a dainty and a luxury. In the course of time, however, vegetables became more plentiful, and carrots and cabbages ceased to be imported from abroad, as they were so late as 1595.

Such are some of the points of interest which may be gathered from a perusal of these old records, and it is instructive to notice improvements which have been made in almost every department of horticulture since the days when Bacon wrote and Gerarde moralised.

H. ORMONDE.

CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.—WHAT TO WEAR IN AUGUST.

FROM OUR PARIS AND LONDON CORRESPONDENTS.

I.—FROM OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.

REVELLING in the August sunshine, I often wish that Addison and his *confrères* of the *Spectator* were once more in the flesh to discourse in their pure and perfect English on the walking flower gardens into which the fashionable hats are now transformed. But it must be admitted that youth looks undeniably beautiful in the extraordinary headgear which fickle Fashion has decreed to be worn. And yet much of the current millinery would seem to be the outcome of a distraught brain. In the vignette I have portrayed one of the most simple head-dresses, but I think anyone would be puzzled to construct such a hat without a model of the materials provided. Required, a perfectly flat shape of fine straw, a few yards of ribbon, and two sprays of roses. To begin at the beginning, you must fashion the straw disc into form. In the present instance what is required is a box-pleat at the back. This draws down at the sides, overshadows the face, and leaves an indentation in the centre, where the crown is to be. On this a twisted piece of the ribbon is introduced. The

roses are put in erect, one in front, the other resting on the back pleat, and the opening at the back is filled in with bows of ribbon, a series of loops set somewhat close together. Every atom of trimming used is turned to account. There is no waste of labour. Where the straw is likely to catch in the hair, there is a soft muslin or silk head-piece, but no other lining is necessary. The inside of the brim is nearly always left in its natural state, save sometimes when a ruching of lace borders the edge, or a narrow rouleau of velvet is placed at a distance of about an inch from the edge. A bandeau of velvet occasionally outlines where the crown should be, giving a firmer purchase on the head. Some of the shapes have a slightly raised crown, but many of the newest French models have the crown formed of two wings, set side by side. Turn your classical knowledge to effect, and call to mind the helmet of Mercury, and you will see exactly how these wings are disposed. Hats are certainly worn by women of riper years more than used to be considered *convenable*.

I do not think it is at all necessary to pay large sums of money for any such head-covering. There are so many fashion plates to be had, and these have only to be followed ; but be sure to buy good materials, and do not attempt anything too ambitious. Now, if ever, is the time of year when a flower-laden hat would seem to be most suitable, and, if you choose it well, one may be made to do duty with many dresses. Bright green oats, roses of every kind, and forget-me-nots would seem to be the favourite blooms.

Returning from the Madeleine on Sunday I noted a sweet young girl who wore a white grenadine made in the style of the dress here sketched, which in front, at all events, had all the appearance of an upper skirt edged with two rows of lace insertion over a deep-gathered flounce treated in the same way. The bodice was fastened at the back, and ended at the waist with a ribbon band, a rosette on the left side and pendent ends. You will notice how prettily the fulness of the front appears to be kept in place by bands of ribbon-like *bretelles* ending in similar rosettes. The sleeves form a puff to the elbow, but allowing a longer length of tight sleeve than we have been accustomed to describe as a gauntlet. How sorry I am, however, that we are falling back on that troublesome plan of fastening dresses at the back. Avoid it if possible, unless you are of so lissom a figure that you can manage to button them for yourself, or have a sister at hand ready to help you. Dressmakers are so clever now in devising the several ways in which the fastenings of bodices can be completely hidden—not that I can really see why we are ashamed to show how we have got into our gowns, especially as the terribly too close-fitting bodices are things of the past.

English matrons of middle age show a great deal of misplaced confidence in adopting the severely plain-cut skirts, which are so terribly trying to figures that are increasing in bulk. Long basques, you will see by the accompanying picture, are still well worn, and they mercifully shroud undue proportions.

I have selected the dress worn by the young child in our picture because the most inexperienced of home dressmakers could reproduce it, and it is as suitable to a slim figure up to five- or six-and-twenty. The model is made of check, cut on the bias, but any woollen or cotton stuff would answer. A band of either ribbon, or insertion or galon is placed round the simple skirt, about six inches from the hem ; the bodice fastens

THE PEACEMAKER.

under the arms, and is simply a fulling, brought up in a point back and front. It needs a whalebone under each arm, and one in the centre, and the sleeves and the upper portion of the bodice may be put on separately like a shirt. There is a ribbon sash round the waist. The hat, you will note, has a Mephisto bow tied with upright ends, like the forked horns we associate with demons. The philosophers who laugh at women have plenty of food for their sarcasm now.

Belts of all kinds and wide sashes are the fashion, and a convenient fashion, too, in hot summer days, which we love to spend in the country. With a dark skirt or so, all kinds of changes are possible in shirts and blouses, but these must be put on properly, which means that they must be drawn down thoroughly and no vacuum should be visible between skirt and bodice. The easiest way of getting over this is to let the belt seem part and parcel of the dress, and fasten it over the skirt. I will let you into the secret of how to make a wide ribbon into a smart-looking belt. It must be long enough to encircle the waist twice. Divide it in the exact centre, and there, with invisible stitches, make a casing, and insert a whalebone, the precise depth you wish the belt to be. When you have it on, secure this firmly to the centre, then cross the ends at the back, bring them forward and draw them as tight as possible, turn in the edges, and secure them with ornamental pins. The effect is good and trim.

"WHAT SHALL I SAY TO THIS?"

II.—FROM OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENT.

WE have every reason to be proud of our English summer this year, and we are taking advantage of it to adopt the prettiest styles of dress that have been in vogue for some years. Bright colours have been worn by the majority of women, the exceptions being the many who, for family reasons, are obliged to wear mourning. The favourite tints are perfectly charming to the eye, and yet in a manner resonant. Vivid peach mauves, lightest greens, or eau de nil; light tones of maize, and that delightful colour which we call "maize pink." Not content with silks and satins and light fashionable grenadines, we are affecting an admixture of velvet, which certainly has the merit of being most effective. Never was anything more becoming to the ordinary Englishwoman than the full Empire sleeves which they have added to their evening gowns, mostly in contrast to the rest of the dress, and for day wear the mousse greens, and other tones have been effective and, at the same time, charming.

Loose gowns are a great comfort for evening. Happily, Englishwomen do not as a rule adopt the French matinées, which are only an excuse for wearing an untidy gown in the morning; but for what is called a "tea-gown" a certain amount of thought and care is necessary, and I think you will agree with me that the accompanying model is one which has no appearance of a dressing-gown. It is made in a light pink crépon in the Princess style, trimmed with deep lace; one long continuous revers outlines the narrow front of piece lace with a cascade to the waist. A lace pelerine comes from each revers on the shoulder, and the full puffed sleeves to the elbow are continued to the wrist in bouillons of muslin. If you have by you old-fashioned Limerick lace, or other scarves, a couple of them is all you need for trimming the newest style of tea-gown. The oblong ends are allowed to float back and front, being kept in place in front with a ribbon belt, round the waist; but, passing over the shoulder to the back, they are gathered together there, so that they diminish to a small point at the waist. It is the mode now to make tea-gowns of figured washing muslins, chiffon, shaded and shot grenadines; indeed, the thinner the material the better.

In the country, even in August, "some days will be dark and dreary," and though I counsel every woman to wear washing dresses as much as she can, still she

must have in her wardrobe one or more substantial woollen gowns, and you will find the accompanying sketch a useful suggestion. It could be reproduced in plain cloth, serge, or almost any fancy woollen, check, or otherwise. The skirt is severely simple, with five rows of stitching at the hem, and it opens on both sides of the front breadth, the aperture rendered ornamental by straps and buttons as you see in the picture. The buttons on either side of the bodice are merely ornamental, and the belt is simply fastened with one. You can wear any kind of shirt with it, and thus produce a great variety in your dress. A young girl starting on a round of visits, with a black serge, has any amount of changes ready to hand if she will invest in a few shirts, blouses, and waistcoats. It would be a very comfortable style for travelling, reducing the luggage to a minimum.

No washing material is so fashionable now as linen, and some of the best caterers of Fashion are making up plain linen skirts and long open jackets in a variety of colourings. White and Holland tints find special favour with light blue or white shirts. Most of our leaders of Fashion have been seen in Hyde Park this year thus dressed, and a gown of the sort comes within the compass of the most moderate purses, only the dress needs to be well made—the more simply the better.

Sleeveless jackets are greatly in vogue, some made in the Eton form with a little point at the back, but more with a rounded turn-down collar, and a point cut up in the centre of the waist, with deep oval slashings on either side, through which a ribbon is run. This can be made to match the gowns, but the favourite material is velvet. They look well with bell-shaped skirts, a great improvement on the umbrella style, the lines falling straight without rendering the edge of the skirt unduly wide.

If you are once able to secure a good shape of skirt, you may dismiss that part of the subject of dress with contentment. An evening dress looks exceedingly smart with one of the short Empire jackets ending at the bust and supplemented by a wide Empire sash. These have revers, and are ornamented with large buttons, and open sufficiently to show a full front of lace falling downwards from the neck.

Shot silks have been much used for parasols, and these tints appear in varied lights, chameleon-like, to assume quite a different aspect, and match curious colours with which they appear to have no sympathy whatever, but seen together the blending is beautiful.

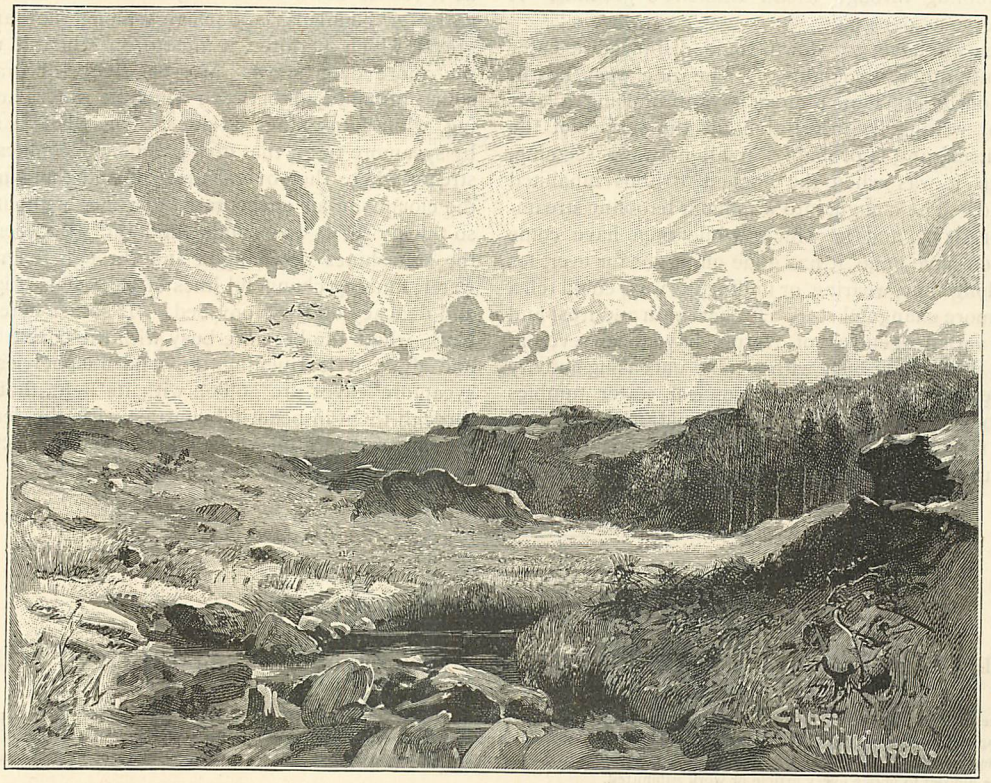
Long gowns, even in London were beginning to be discarded towards the end of the season. In the evening they were found impossible, and in the day-time out of doors ungraceful. If any of you happen to have by you a long skirt, unduly tight about the hips, let me advise you to shorten it by undoing the centre seam, thereby allowing a wider edge to remain in its original position, removing the extra length from the top, leaving it wider. Make use of all this fulness to the best advantage; do not heed what any second-rate dressmaker tells you. Introduce a little fulness in the front of the skirt. This will break the lines and give softness and grace, in lieu of a hard outline. I explained in the spring how the umbrella and cornet skirts were made, and now we islanders are becoming so nautical in our tastes, that the newest skirt and the newest bonnet rejoice in the name of "Nautilus." The point into which the centre back breadth of the skirt is cut is carried up from between the shoulders as a sort of Watteau, for Watteau pleats in all sorts and materials, both for day and evening wear, are the vogue. In the evening they often start from a large paste buckle, and they must not be too bulky, but must show the outline of the waist, which gives a deal of grace and yet much dignity to the figure, but with a Watteau pleat height is essential.

AN AUGUST AFTERNOON CLIMB.

BY ALFRED J. BAMFORD.

THE climb is a good test of one's lungs, for the moor lies high above the busy town from which it takes its name, and the path is often steep. But how amply repaid is he who climbs! How rich a foundation colour the brown peat affords, out of which the bright and ever-varying greens of the whinberry, the heather, and the many different kinds of grass stand in bold relief! How the clumps of moss, brighter still—some of them almost golden—delight the eye, while they warn the feet from the treachery of boggy places! The heather is just beginning to burst into colour, and the air, fresh and invigorating, makes the blood run a quickened course.

It is "The Twelfth;" but the moor is silent. No report of guns disturbs its quiet. The owners have passed a self-denying ordinance, or, at least, are postponing their onslaught on the grouse, for the young birds of the season, that should by this time be strong on the wing, are not. Disaster overtook them, and the "first eggs" were chilled while they spent a necessarily prolonged time in foraging for food, or—the landmarks being covered by the snow—vainly resought the nests they had left. So the young birds of this season are both few and backward, and the sportsmen must wait.



"AS UNFREQUENTED AND SILENT AS ANY SCOTTISH GLEN."

We are not sportsmen, and therefore experience in this matter neither disappointment nor impatience. If our privileges are restricted, they are immediate. If our right of way across the moor is defined by a narrow path for our feet, our eyes are free, and we have not to wait for our enjoyment. To-day and now we may take our stand upon this high point, and what a vision is ours! We are on the edge of the moor, on a point of it, indeed, that juts out promontory-wise into a comparatively level stretch of country. Far away on that plain we see the smoke from the chimneys of Preston—a grey patch, under which are the busy industry, the grievous disappointments, and the bright and ever-renewed hopes of a population of nearly a hundred thousand of our brothers and sisters, and out from which we can trace the lines of road leading in different directions. Far northward runs one of these, and the eye—following and outstripping it—sees, across the gleam of light on the sands of Morecambe Bay, the smoke rising from the ironworks of Ulverston, and the shipbuilding yards at Barrow, and, more dimly still, traces the faint outline of the higher peaks among the mountains that guard the English lakes. On our right we see the land rising again—rising to heights that far exceed that of the moor on which we are standing. Here is a mighty piling up of mountains, and, overtopping their fellows, we see the lofty heads of Wernside, Ingleborough, and Penygant. To the left, the clustered houses of Blackpool stand out against the fainter grey of the sea beyond, and, further to the left still, a bright light reveals where the sun, hidden from us by the clouds, is shining on the waters. Behind that silvery light the rain is falling, or we should be able to trace the distant Snowdon range, while behind us, through the openings in the hills, are to be caught glimpses of the smoky factory chimneys of more than one industrial centre. My friend and host, Ellerslie, tells me that about this same time of the year, he was once standing on this spot, watching the sun sink slowly down through the sea haze, and, as the broad shield touched the horizon, it revealed on its luminous background the clearly-marked contour of the Isle of Man. The road that is lost to our sight in the valley to the left, enters, within a mile or so, a district as unfrequented and silent as any Scottish glen, and yet it is within some four miles of half a million of people.

Yes, the heathery breeze, the wide vision of towns and fields, of sea and mountains, the wonderful colours and tints of the moor itself, its shades multiplied by the changeful sky, fill, almost to wearying, eye and mind.

Well, we must go down again, but it is not with any sense of disappointment. We cross the moor to a point where the tiny tricklings of water through the peat obtain sufficient unity of movement to justify them in regarding themselves as the beginning of a little stream—the stream that by and by runs dancing

and babbling through friend Ellerslie's grounds. It shall serve as our guide.

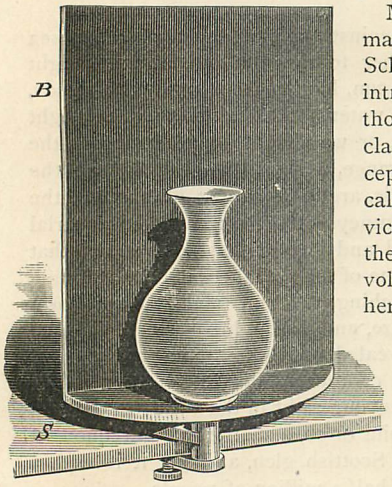
When we have got down some distance we enter into quite other surroundings. The wide, open, heath-clad moor offers Time almost as unpromising a surface for writing its inscriptions as the surface of the ocean itself, and is probably, in all outward seeming, much as it was when the ancient Britons inhabited the land. The clough, into which our babbling stream-guide leads us, and in which, while men have come and men have gone, it has gone on, if not for ever, for a very long time, wearing, or finding, its way, could tell a much more changeful story ; for here rain and frost and all the varied agencies of Nature have been ever at work. Especially busy with a most unceasing activity has been the little stream, whose clear water tumbles over rocks in many a miniature rapid, and now and then a fall, while here and there banks of pebbles tell how, during heavy rain, it gathers force and intensity as it rushes down between the rocks that shut it in its narrower channels, and carries along the sand and gravel, which, perforce, it must drop when it reaches the more open spots. Mosses richly decorate the stones around and between which its waters are rushing, while ferns fringe its sides. The whole is shut in by sycamore trees, that give a delicious coolness to the stream where they overshadow it, and that impart to the clough an air of securest seclusion, without being so thickly set as to exclude the light. Between them the sun shines down upon and through the rippling water, limning changeful lines of fairy-like brightness and delicacy on the stony bed. It shines here on the bank, where the bees are busy with the purple nettles, and there it is ripening the wild raspberries. The sycamore leaves are golden with its light, that passes through them in beautiful contrast with the leaves of the undergrowth, on which a grey gleam reflects more or less completely the blue of the clear sky.

THE GATHERER:

AN ILLUSTRATED RECORD OF INVENTION, DISCOVERY, LITERATURE, AND SCIENCE.

Correspondents are requested, when applying to the Editor for the names and addresses of the persons from whom further particulars respecting the articles in the GATHERER may be obtained, to forward a stamped and addressed envelope for reply, and in the case of inventors submitting specimens for notice, to prepay the carriage. The Editor cannot in any case guarantee absolute certainty of information, nor can he pledge himself to notice every article or work submitted.

Teaching Perception.



Mr. Kerr, head-master of Allan Glen's School, Glasgow, has introduced a new method of teaching a class readiness of perception and mental calculation. The device employed, called the Allan Glen Revolver, is illustrated herewith and consists of a revolving blackboard, B, having a shelf, S, attached, on which an article can be placed. On the side of the board turned from the pupils, rows of figures, dots, or letters are marked, and the board is spun round at different speeds. The pupils must brace themselves up to read the words, or figures, and count the dots. The exercises are graduated, and become more difficult. The board is also used in the freehand drawing class to train the students in grasping and fixing contours in their minds. For example, a jar is placed on the revolving shelf, and the students are expected to draw its outline. Pictures are also shown for a moment in the same way. Lengths, areas, and volumes are also estimated by exposing certain examples side by side with others of known dimensions.

A Cross-Country Railroad.

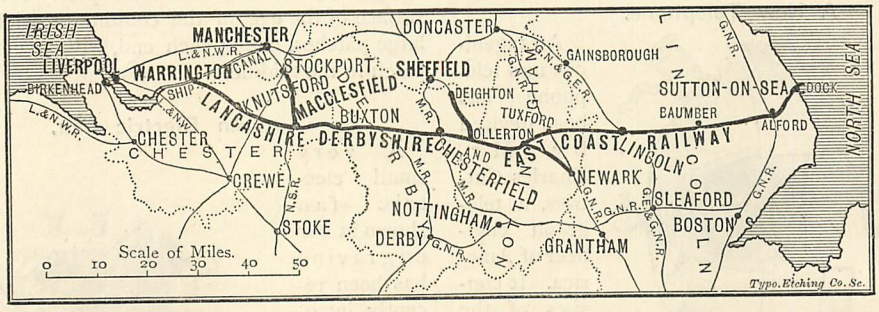
Let no one think that the days of railway enterprise have passed away. Even in England a district has been found in which the railway has never been, and the new line from West to East, from the docks in the Ship Canal at Warrington to those on the North Sea at Sutton, in Lincolnshire, will, within three years, be a fact accomplished.

A glance at the accompanying sketch map will show the aims and objects of the promoters of the line —noblemen and gentlemen connected with great Derbyshire coal industries, who, dissatisfied with the present means for the distribution of the output, determined upon a line of their own, and on connections by means of which the development of their property and its products could be assured.

With this view the line already projected will be made extending, when completed, for 170 miles, possessing "feeders" to many important towns, and access to London along the Great Northern and Great Eastern Railways. To the Great Eastern line the benefits of the new railway promise immense advantages in the carriage of minerals alone.

The course of the East to West Line—or, officially, the Lancashire, Derbyshire, and East Coast Railway —is from Warrington, a very important town, through Knutsford to Macclesfield ; thence by Buxton of

water-cure fame, and the celebrated Peak country to Chatsworth and Chesterfield; thence *viâ* Ollerton and Tuxford to Lincoln, traversing the coal-fields of Derbyshire, half-way between Doncaster and Nottingham. The main line from the cathedral city is then continued in a slightly northerly direction, by Baumber and Alford, to Sutton-on-Sea, some twenty miles south of Grimsby.



A CROSS-COUNTRY RAILROAD.

The advantages conferred by the railway will be very great—not only, as is hoped, to the shareholders and promoters, but to the public. The railroad will traverse a district hardly touched by existing lines; it will have important branches to Manchester, Stockport, Beighton, Newark, and connections with Liverpool, on the one hand, and London, as well as all the towns *en route* thither on the main lines, already mentioned, and their branches. Thus Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, their coalfields and ironworks, with the incalculable products of both, will be brought into touch with the continents of Europe and America. The benefits which will accrue to the farmer and the merchant, to the coal-owner and the manufacturer, may be estimated from the fact that produce of all kinds may by it be brought from the far East and forwarded to America without breaking bulk.

Shifting Latitudes.

In 1876 Sir William Thomson, the great physicist, who has recently been elevated to the peerage, arrived at the conclusion that changes in the sea-level brought about by the weather might displace the direction of the earth's axis in space, or, in other words, sway the world from its old balance and so produce an alteration of latitude to the extent of half a second. Since then his conclusion has been verified in a remarkable manner. Of late years it has been observed that the latitude of Berlin and other Continental cities has altered by a fraction of a second—about a third in fact—and the change could not be traced to errors of observation. Accordingly a party was sent to Honolulu, which is nearly opposite to Berlin on the earth's surface, in order to measure its latitude and find out whether it had shifted by a corresponding amount in the opposite direction. The commission have now done so, and find that it has. So we are forced to infer that the axis of the earth has shifted by one-third of a second in recent years. The discovery has, of course, an astronomical importance, but is not likely to perceptibly affect the general condition of the world.

Another New Egg-Cooker.

How is it that domestic invention has run so much in the direction of egg-cookers as it has done during the last year or two? For the third time within a comparatively brief period we have an apparatus of this nature to describe, and in this case the inventor is a Parisian, M. Mesdran, whose invention is illustrated in the accompanying blocks. The hollow central cylinder, A, of Fig. 1 slides over the other cylinder, B, containing a notch in which the trigger, C, will catch when the upper cylinder is pressed down, carrying with it the tray upon which stand the eggs. This is done inside the saucepan, shown in Fig. 2; the eggs are just covered with cold water, and the spirit lamp is lighted. As soon as the eggs are cooked the pressure of the steam will release the trigger, and the coiled spring within the central cylinder will automatically lift the eggs out of the water, as shown in our illustration, and at the same time

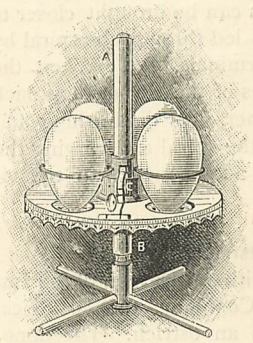


FIG. 1.

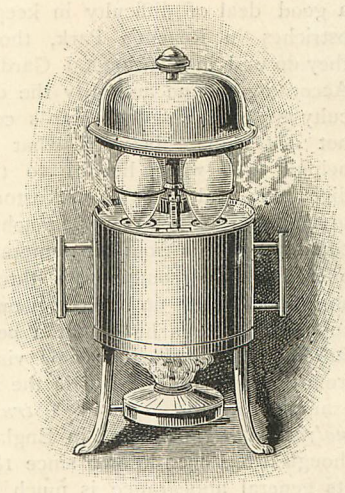
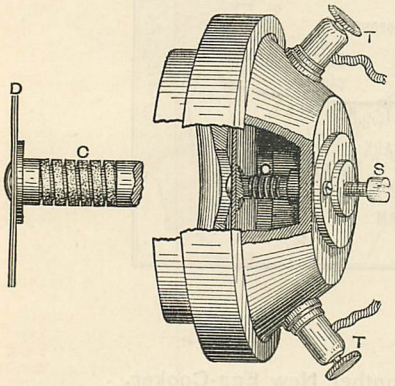


FIG. 2.

raise the lid of the saucepan. By a simple screw attachment to the trigger the time of cooking may be readily regulated. We ought to say that this method of cooking is scientifically approved, though it occupies somewhat longer than the traditional three minutes.

A New Telephone.

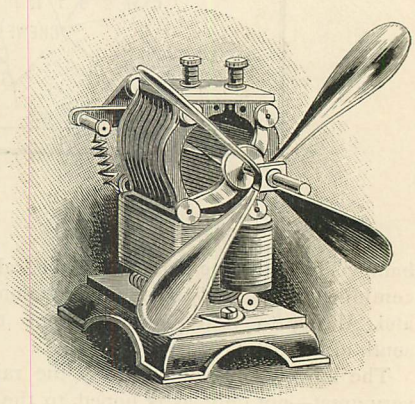


An ingenious new telephone has been devised by Mr. Charles Cuttriss, a telegraph engineer of America. It consists of the usual diaphragm, D, which is spoken to and vibrates under the impact of the sonorous waves. A spiral of carbon filament, C, is cemented to the middle of the diaphragm, and to an adjusting screw, S, by which the spires can be brought closer to each other. The current is led through the spiral by connecting wires to the terminals, T T. When the diaphragm vibrates the spires of the carbon approach to and recede from each other, thus diminishing and increasing the resistance of the spiral and varying the strength of the current in accordance with the vibrations of the voice.

A New Ostrich.

By the kindness of Mr. Keith Anstruther, of the Imperial British East Africa Company, the Zoological Society once more possesses an ostrich. The donor intended to grace the Gardens with a pair, but, unfortunately, only the female arrived alive. There has been a good deal of difficulty in keeping ostriches in Regent's Park, though they do well in Continental Gardens. According to one authority the difficulty arose because "the birds could not discriminate between what was helpful and what hurtful to their digestion; and a public accustomed to slip pennies into automatic machines could not refrain from the temptation offered by their omnivorous throats, and filled them up with poisonous copper." Let us hope that a better fate is in store for our new visitor from Somali Land, for she is the first example of the species (*Struthio molybdophanes*) exhibited in England, though it has been known since 1883. Its general appearance is much like that of the common ostrich, but the parts of the skin that are not plumaged are of a greyish blue, while in the common form they are flesh-coloured. In the adult male the beak and a plate in front of the tarsus are reddish. There is also a difference in the eggs: those of the new species, apparently confined to Somali Land, are said to be larger and more rounded, and the pores (which are scattered pretty evenly over the surface of the egg of the common ostrich) form two large patches, one at each end, with a nearly poreless patch in the middle.

An Electric Fan.



A very small electric fan shown in our engraving has been recently introduced. It stands 4½ in. high, and has an ornamental appearance, suitable for the rooms of a house. The blades of the fan are driven by an electromagnet, which is excited by the electric current from a single "dry" cell—that is to say, a cell which does not require to be replenished with liquids.

An Automatic Postman.

In Geneva they have an apparatus for delivering letters and parcels to the upper stories of high buildings. The common letter box is situated on the ground floor, and has compartments in it for every story. Into these the postman puts the letters and parcels. An electric circuit is thus closed, and a current of electricity from a battery turns on a supply of

A NEW OSTRICH.

water from a cistern at the top of the house. The water flows into a cylinder acting as a counterweight to the letter box, which begins to ascend to the top story, but on the way it automatically drops its cargo of letters and parcels at the proper flats. When the highest floor is reached, the water escapes from the cylinder, and the letter box returns to the ground floor.

A New Gas-Lamp.

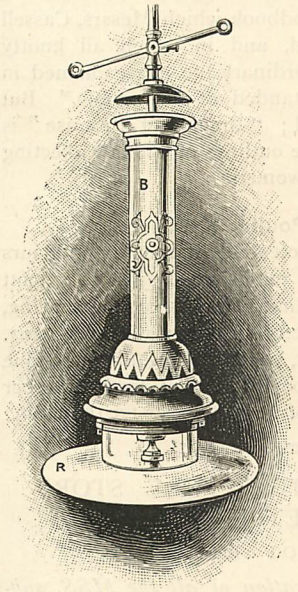


FIG. 1.

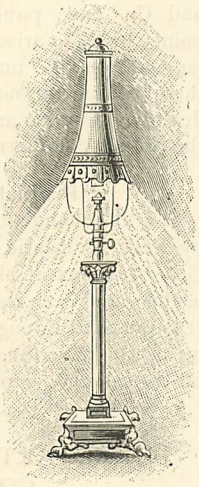


FIG. 2.

In this regenerative lamp the gas burns between two currents of heated air, one striking on the upper, the other on the under, side of the flame. In the new lamp which we illustrate, the burners are of steatite, and hence do not readily choke; and the black shadows on the ceiling are obviated by a translucent reflector throwing part of the light down, and another part up. There are other improvements on the earlier lamps; for example, the addition of a regulator for the supply of the gas and prevention of smoke. Fig. 1 represents a hanging type suitable for the principal rooms of a dwelling house. The body, B, is encased in enamelled steel or porcelain, and the reflector, R, is of opal glass. Fig. 2 represents a standard lamp suitable for desks and reading tables.

The "Painter" of Callao.

The "pintor" or painter of Callao is a curious phenomenon observed in the Bay during the summer months from December to April; and according to recent investigations by Señor Raimondi, it consists of evolutions of sulphuretted hydrogen gas which changes the colour of objects painted with white lead, and hence the name. At such times, too, the sea becomes red with a species of infusoria. Señor Raimondi shows that the gas comes from the vegetable mud brought down by the river Rimac which does not escape from the Bay owing to the Humboldt current crossing its mouth. The same phenomenon is seen on other parts of the Peruvian coast where the like causes obtain.

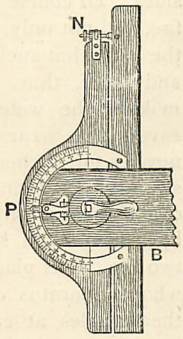
The Tea-Plant of America.

From of old the Creeks and Cherokee Indians of Georgia and Florida have made a kind of tea or "black drink" from a species of holly (*ilex cassine*) which grows along the coast of the southern States of America, from James River to the Rio Grande. According to a recent bulletin of the United States Department of Agriculture, the leaves and twigs contain caffeine or theine, and the infusion seems to have salutary properties which are wanting in tea. It is proposed to cultivate the plant on the maritime belt above mentioned, of which some 40,000 acres are available for the purpose.

A Fire-Bucket Holder.

Water buckets in rows for use in case of fire are apt to become empty from evaporation and dirty from dust. To remedy these evils a holder or tank has been brought out, the buckets being ranged one over another in the tank, so as to take up as little space as possible and yet be filled with clean water when lifted out in case of fire. The tank is covered with an air-tight lid, and being ornamental, it is more sightly than the open sets of buckets, while not occupying quite so much space in a hall or corridor.

A Protracting T-Square.



The new T-square shown in the engraving is of American device, and enables the draughtsman to draw any angle with great precision. The square is first approximately adjusted and clamped by hand, then finely adjusted by means of the screws, N, which turn the auxiliary head of the square round a centre coinciding with the main stud. The blade, B, is clamped in its place by an eccentric lever instead of a milled nut. The pointer of the protractor, P, is also adjustable by set screws, so that the blade can be brought into a position coinciding with a line previously drawn or to compensate for an inaccurate drawing board.

A Fossil Mammal from the European Chalk.

By slow degrees gaps in the "geological record" are being filled up; and though from the nature of things it is idle to expect that that record will ever be made complete and continuous, we may hope that the steady persevering search which is being prosecuted almost everywhere, will lead to solid additions to our knowledge of the animals which lived on this planet before the age of man. Till quite recently no remains of mammals had been found in the European Chalk. In the Purbeck beds of Dorsetshire several genera of small marsupials were known, and one of these little pouched mammals was said to have its nearest living allies in the kangaroo-rat of Australia. Above the Purbeck

beds they all seemed to die out, and there were no more traces of mammals till the Tertiary period. In a quarry near Hastings, however, a bone-bed in the Wadhurst clay, in the Wealden formation, has yielded evidence that this little marsupial, or a closely-allied genus, survived in Britain till later times; for a tooth, closely resembling those in the jaw on which the genus Plagiaulax—for so the animal is called—was founded, has been discovered there by Mr. Dawson, of Uckfield, who has spent a great deal of time in carefully examining this deposit. He forwarded his find to the Natural History Museum at South Kensington, and the authorities there have named the animal to which the tooth belonged *Plagiaulax dawsoni*, in honour of the discoverer, whose labours have been rewarded by the first traces of a mammal from the European Chalk.

Novelties for the Household.

A seasonable novelty is a removable metal cover for glasses or jugs, and equally applicable to jars for jam or marmalade. It is the invention of Mr. F. Mockler, who fixes the cover to the glass by means of a simple flexible clip, which does no harm to the vessel and holds the lid securely in its place as a barrier to all intruding insects or to the other thousand and one waifs and strays of outdoor life at the present season.—Passing from the garden or the summer-house to the kitchen, we have to notice a new kettle, appropriately named "The Rapid," which has a shield fixed round it at a little distance from its sides. Of course this shield acts as a "drawer" to the fire, and not only keeps the cold air from the sides of the kettle but sucks up the flames between the kettle and itself, thus, as its inventor claims, not only making the water boil more rapidly, but actually saving the wear and tear on the kettle.—Another novelty for kitchen use is a reversible "fish fryer and strainer" for frying flat fish or steaks of fish. Two oval-shaped strainers of stout wire net are connected by a hinge and secured by a catch. Between these two the fish is placed, and when one side is cooked the whole apparatus can be readily turned by means of the handles at either end, without the necessity of handling the fish, or the risk of breaking it, during the operation.—Castor oil is not a household favourite, but it is quite a household necessary. A new preparation of the oil has just been brought out under the name of Palma Christi, in which all the essential and medicinal qualities are preserved, though the dose is rendered distinctly palatable and even sweet. This prepared oil has undergone severe medical tests, and it is reported to stand them well in the opinion of competent authorities.—A new combined note-paper, and envelope, under the title of *Semper Paratus*, has just been introduced. The note-paper is cut in such a way that the piece taken from one corner forms one flap of the outside covering that serves as the envelope. For short notes and ready use this new invention is to be commended.

Who may Marry—and When?

Like all English law, our marriage law is the outcome of a long-continued growth, and the result is a strange medley of delightfully simple and incomprehensibly difficult points. Few of us who are not lawyers know exactly when marriage is or is not legal to any given person, or to what extent parental sanction can facilitate or prohibit a wedding. And if this is the case with English weddings, to how much greater extent is it so of what are called "mixed-marriages" between two persons, respectively of British and of foreign birth or domicile? Two barristers are responsible for "Lawful Wedlock"—a daintily dressed little handbook which Messrs. Cassell and Co. have published, and in which all knotty points likely to arise in ordinary life are explained in language to be "understanded of the people." But these points are not all; "Breach of Promise" is dealt with, and so are the outlines of the law affecting the property of married women.

"Profitable Poultry Keeping"

Is a little handbook professedly written for amateurs by F. A. McKenzie, and published by Mr. L. Upcott Gill. It treats of all ordinary details of the rearing, feeding, and even the doctoring of fowls of every sort. It is practical throughout, and will be found of value by all who have taken up the care of fowls, whether for the sake of a supply of fresh eggs, or for the table.

THREE-PART ADVENTURE STORY COMPETITION.

AWARD OF PRIZES.

After careful consideration of all the MSS. submitted in response to the notice in our January number, the FIRST PRIZE OF TWENTY POUNDS *has been awarded to*

SIDNEY C. GRIER,
Kirkley, St. Anne's Road, Eastbourne;

The SECOND PRIZE OF FIFTEEN POUNDS *to*

BESSIE E. DUFFETT,
Meadvale, Redhill;

And the THIRD PRIZE OF TEN POUNDS *to*

L. FROST-RATTRAY,
Auckland, New Zealand;

And HONOURABLE MENTION *to the following competitors:—*

Name.	*Address.*
B. A. CHAMBERS ...	Rotherham.
J. M. WAGSTAFF ...	Wandsworth Common, S.W.

The Editor hopes to publish the prize stories in the Magazine in due course.

Unsuccessful competitors who desire the return of their MSS. must, in accordance with Rule 7 of the General Regulations published in our January number, apply at once to the Editor; and every application must be accompanied by stamps to defray the cost of carriage.

Intending competitors in the Four-Part Story Competition are reminded that September 1st, 1892, is the latest day for receiving MSS. Full particulars of this competition will be found on page 128 of our January number.

(*Drawn by* W. Hatherell.)

IN THE GARDEN.

LADY LORRIMER'S SCHEME.

By EDITH E. CUTHELL, Author of "The Story of a Glamour," "The Yacht in the Bay," etc. etc.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

"The trail of the serpent is over it all."

MARJORIE ASTON had been into Loamhampton shopping, two days after her meeting with Sir Hubert Erle, and was returning by the train in the dusk of an autumn afternoon. It is a little branch line which runs from the county town past Great Morchard, the nearest station to Cerne, and the company is careful and thrifty in the matter of gas. Marjorie was too early for the train, and sat herself down in the dim waiting-room. It was a drizzling, disagreeable evening. The down express on the main line had halted a moment or two at Loamhampton, and vanished into the gloom. The station master and all the porters appeared to have gone home to tea. Marjorie fancied herself the only passenger at the station.

But a sound of voices from the equally dark ladies' waiting-room next door presently undeceived her. The door stood ajar, and she became the involuntary hearer of the following conversation:

"You put in my grey and orange tea-gown, Rosalie?"

"Yes, m'ladi (in a foreign accent), I did put him in. I zought you would vant him. Mademoiselle here is always so *bien mise*."

"Oh yes; I shall want a lot of clothes here. As you say, mademoiselle dresses well; well, and so she ought!"

"Ah! m'ladi, wid her colour, her hair! Mademoiselle is not *forte*, not clevare, like m'ladi. To dress is all she has!"

"You're right there, Rosalie," replied the other, with a little unpleasant laugh. "Poor little fool! but I *do* envy her her frocks sometimes."

"And then for monsieur, m'ladi? For monsieur, I zought ve vould bring de orange tea-gown, de red zerge which go so well to m'ladi's hair. Zere is monsieur to vhom ve must zink."

"Rosalie, you talk too much, and I let you! I've no designs in that quarter with the red serge from town, I assure you. Now hold your tongue, and listen. I want you to get round mademoiselle's maid, and use your eyes and copy some of her dresses. I tell you I'm very hard up just now—Madame Chiffon and the rest are all worrying with their bills; I must get some of my new winter gowns looked up here. You understand me, Rosalie?"

"*Mais oui*, m'ladi. But it will take time."

"There's no hurry, Rosalie. I mean to stay here some while. It does not suit me to go back to town and set up housekeeping just yet, but I depend on you to make something out of this visit for my dresses."

"*Très voluntiers*, m'ladi, as we stay long. Ah! mademoiselle will rejoice her heart, she adores m'ladi. If I might offer a counsel to m'ladi, it would be to stay for always. Monsieur is rich, very rich; he admires m'ladi: I see it——"

"Rosalie, you let your tongue run on a great deal too fast! I hear a noise. Go and see if that's the train."

Two minutes later the trainlet for Great Morchard ambled slowly into the station, and, after a due delay, ambled out again into the misty twilight across the watery meadows and over the winding More, several times, on low noisy bridges.

"What a nice person to have to come and stay in one's house!" thought Marjorie to herself, as she smiled over the above-recorded dialogue.

At Great Morchard the station lamps were lit. The first person Marjorie saw, as she descended, parcel-laden, was Effie Marshall standing under a gas-lamp, looking up and down the platform with a bewildered air, as if seeking someone.

Marjorie was advancing towards her, when a voice behind called:

"Effie!"

The girl turned hastily, eagerly, and then rushed towards a woman who had just alighted.

"I thought you would come and meet me," said the latter, as they embraced.

The voice was the voice heard in the waiting-room. Marjorie could not help half turning round and taking mental stock of its owner.

She was a tall woman, of five- or six-and-twenty, fashionably dressed, and what the society papers term "smart." A second glance showed her to be undeniably handsome in an uncommon and rather attractive style—black hair, steel grey eyes, cold, but brilliant, a nose and chin with a good deal of character, but with lips which, when closed, were a trifle too tight and thin for amiability.

"I felt you wanted me—I felt as if I *must* come!" answered Effie, clinging to her. "Papa thought it too wet, but, dear Lady Lorrimer, I felt I *must* come!"

And they passed through to the carriage, not noticing Marjorie, who stood in the shadow.

"Dear me!" said someone, coming up behind. "Why, Miss Aston, is that Lady Lorrimer come to stay with the Marshalls?"

The speaker was Mrs. Bucknall, come to the station about a parcel.

"Effie called her by that name. Do you know her?"

"I meet her about, when we are up in residence, at my cousin's in Queen's Gate chiefly. She's a woman who's about in London a great deal."

"Who is she?"

"She was one of the Allerton girls—they were all like that: handsome, striking, clever. That is Lilah.

She married old General Sir John Lorrimer and went out to India. He was old enough to be her father, and, if it did not sound malicious, I should say he disappointed her ; for she was left very badly off at his death."

"She seems to be a lively young lady."

"All the Allertons were that—too lively for my taste."

"I wonder what brings her down here ?"

"Can't imagine. Perhaps she has designs on poor Mr. Marshall! 'Bevare of viddies!' as Mr. Weller, senior, said!" laughed Mrs. Bucknall good-humouredly. "Won't you come in and have a cup of tea on your way home, Marjorie ?"

"No, thanks ; the pony cart is waiting for me, and I'm crowded up with parcels."

That evening, after the heterogeneous meal they called "high tea," and which they affected, women-like, Marjorie was a little perturbed to find that her mother had a scheme in her head. Now, Mrs. Aston very rarely had any original ideas or plans. She left that sort of thing to her capable daughter. Never, even in her young days, at all a clever woman, since her husband's death Mrs. Aston had aged beyond her years, and settled down into a chronic valetudinarianism, tempered with peevishness, which would have made her a trying companion for anyone less sweet-tempered than Marjorie.

"I *do* think," she began, looking up from the knitting she was doing for Mr. Adams's new Needlework Guild, of which she was the sheet-anchor—"I *do* think you might have found a day to drive me over to call at Darfield before now."

"I did suggest it, mother, soon after the Marshalls came. But you said the weather was too damp for you."

"So it is. But we've got St. what's his name's little summer to look forward to ; and I am quite willing to sacrifice myself for you, dear child, even if my cough——"

"What do you mean, mother? Effie knows quite well you don't get out much."

"Never mind ; I mean to go over, and to-morrow. I have my reasons, dear," she continued, nodding sagely.

"Certainly, mother. Willie shall drive you. I want to get this sketch done for the club this month——"

"No, no, I won't go with Willie. That boy is *too* disreputable-looking! Really, Marjorie"—and Mrs. Aston looked ready to cry—"I think you might have more consideration for my feelings, when you know how different things were in your poor father's time, than to want to send me out to call at Darfield driven by a raw plough——"

"Very well, very well, mother. I'll drive you, by all means."

"Besides, I *particularly* want you to go with me. Little Miss Marshall has evidently taken a great fancy to you, and is always asking you over, and Mr. Marshall *so* civil. There's no knowing——" and Mrs. Aston nodded sagely again.

Marjorie could not bear hints. She got up, and said gently :

"Mother dear, would you mind my taking these school accounts into the dining-room? I work so much better at them if I'm quite alone, and Mr. Adams wants them to-mor——"

"There! Isn't that what I was saying the other day?" returned the lady triumphantly, as the door closed, and Marjorie departed to peace.

When the Astons were ushered into the drawing-room at Darfield the following afternoon, to Mrs. Aston's chagrin Mr. Marshall was not visible. But she soon forgot all about him in her delight at being introduced to so smart-looking a personage as Lady Lorrimer.

That young lady sailed in soon after the Astons' arrival, and fell to Marjorie's share to converse with : if indeed she could be said to fall to anyone's share ; for Lady Lorrimer was at no pains to trouble herself about her hostess's guests. She responded coldly to the introductions, walked over to the writing-table to direct a letter, played a bit with the pug in a corner, and eventually came and sat down by Miss Aston, plainly showing, in the various little ways a woman can, that she did not consider her worth any attention.

Effie, always ready to talk, prattled on to Mrs. Aston, but the conversation opposite languished. Marjorie felt proud and stiff, and resented the snubbing. Lady Lorrimer, having set the newcomers mentally down as "dowdy aborigines," hardly attempted to conceal a yawn. Finding no other subjects in common, they fell back at last on the appearance of the fat pug, who sat between them, lolling out its tongue.

"Effie," Marjorie at last called across, to the other group, "you've not been over to us for so long. Come to-morrow, will you?"

Effie broke off with Mrs. Aston, but instead of answering Marjorie, looked across to Lady Lorrimer.

"Certainly ; go if it will amuse you, child," nodded the latter, with a little tone of contempt, and leaning back in her chair as if the whole thing bored her. But, at that moment, the door opened, and Mr. Marshall entered, looking rather more worried than usual. Lady Lorrimer's whole manner suddenly changed. She sat up alertly, smiled, showing her beautiful teeth, and looked at him from under her half-closed lids, in a way she had. Marjorie began to find her intolerable. But, with the shifting that now began, Mrs. Aston managed to secure her—a thing she had been pining to do all the time, thereby adroitly, as she imagined, giving Mr. Marshall to Marjorie. He sat down beside her and began to talk books, a subject they had in common. Effie came and stood by Marjorie. The latter took her hand tenderly.

"How cold you are, dear! Are you not well?"

"Not very, I fear," said Mr. Marshall. "Effie had one of her bad neuralgic headaches this morning."

"Perhaps it's the weather!"

"Perhaps. Effie, my darling, go and get that German book, and we'll ask Miss Aston her opinion of that passage that bothers us. I am rubbing up my

German again," he went on, "and Effie is improving hers. I think a little steady reading is so good for her, so quieting."

Effie moved towards the door. Lady Lorrimer slowly lifted her eyes, and followed her with them without a word.

"Did you want me?" asked Effie, turning back.

"No, no, child," she laughed. "Mrs. Aston here is kindly explaining to me the mysteries of stocking knitting. I never could knit, or do anything so useful;" and she smiled sarcastically. Marjorie decided that she was odious.

"In the meantime," Mr. Marshall went on to Marjorie, without paying the slightest attention, "if you will just step into the library, I will show you the new books from Mudie's, Miss Aston; you might like to borrow some."

Mrs. Aston watched them out with a fatuous smile, and Lady Lorrimer fell back in her chair, and yawned again.

When they reached the library, Mr. Marshall pointed to the row of new books on the table, but turned abruptly to Marjorie.

"Do you really think Effie not looking well, Miss Aston? She has been so bright lately, I thought: ever since a pleasant dinner we had at the Bucknalls'. But the last two days her headaches have returned."

"She *has* been wonderfully buoyant," Marjorie replied. "But perhaps entertaining a visitor——" she could not resist adding.

"Oh, but she is devoted to Lady Lorrimer!" Mr. Marshall went on. "I never saw such attachment! Effie indeed quickly made friends with you; it's in her nature; she is very clinging. But that's nothing to her absolute devotion to Lady Lorrimer. The child does not seem to have a will of her own when she is here—is like clay in her hands. I can't say I altogether like it."

"Lady Lorrimer is an old friend?" put in Marjorie, turning over the leaves.

"By no means. We came back from Egypt with her in the P. & O. You know we were in Egypt last spring. Effie was ordered a sea voyage by the doctors, and I was on my way home from India; I had her brought out to meet me there. Lady Lorrimer was on board on the home journey."

"She is very striking-looking," said Marjorie, hardly knowing what line to take.

"Very much admired," replied Mr. Marshall, curtly.

"Does she stay long with you?"

"I really can't say. Effie insisted on my inviting her—indefinitely. It appeared that on board ship she had expressed a wish to come and stay. But I fear she is rather too exciting—exacting—I hardly know how to express it—a companion. What do you think, Miss Aston? I know you take an interest in my poor motherless little girl."

"Indeed I do, Mr. Marshall!" exclaimed Marjorie warmly. "No one can know Effie without being drawn towards her—her little taking, clinging ways, and her sweet little face!"

Mr. Marshall smiled, but it was a sad smile, and then he sighed.

The library door opened, and Lady Lorrimer sailed in; she had a particularly commanding way of moving about, and at once seemed to pervade the room.

"Sorry to disturb," she drawled, showing her white teeth, and looking up at the two under her long lashes; "but Mrs. Aston wishes me to say that she really must leave us—the damp—her knitting—or her cough, I mean—anyhow, the carriage is there."

"Really, Marjorie," began Mrs. Aston, almost as soon as the pony cart had turned the corner of the drive—"really you should not have left me alone with that Lady Lorrimer. She was so rude and disagreeable, I thought. Didn't you?"

"Rather so."

"I couldn't make out the whole time if she wasn't laughing at me or not. She has such an unpleasant way of looking at one under her eyelids, like a half-asleep cat. She's horrid, my dear! You should consider me more. It was most uncomfortable, dear."

"I'm very sorry, mother. I didn't at all ask to go into the library; it was——"

"Mr. Marshall, of course," returned her mother proudly. "Anyone could see that with half an eye. A mere excuse for a *tête-à-tête!* It would never have done for you to refuse it. I should have been most annoyed. Oh, Marjorie, my dear, Darfield's a sweet place! And they say in the village he means to buy it! Oh, Marjorie! If——"

"Now, little mother," said Marjorie firmly, looking down upon all that was visible of Mrs. Aston among a heap of wraps, and speaking as one might speak to a child that wanted suppressing, "that subject, you know, is tabooed between you and me. For once and for all, understand that there is not, and never will be, any question of my—my marrying."

And Marjorie gave the old grey pony a flick as they turned into the quiet roads in the waning light of the sad afternoon.

"And why should there not be?" went on Mrs. Aston, querulously. "I'm sure I don't know. You're not pretty, of course, like that little thing, or handsome, like that widow woman; but there's something very attractive about you, *I* think, Marjorie, when you make the most of yourself; and Mr. Adams says your voice is the most musi——"

"Mother!" cried Marjorie, suddenly pulling up the pony dead short; "Mother, I can't bear it! If you talk any more like that I shall get out and walk, and leave you to drive home alone. Besides, it's very damp from now over the bridge, and if you talk it will make you cough."

Mrs. Aston had a mortal terror of the old pony, always imagining that it was going to "do something or other," so this threat had the desired effect.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

"There's nothing half so sweet in life as love's young dream."

ST. LUKE'S little summer had come at last. It was a clear, still, warm morning, a touch of mistiness on the

horizon and cobwebs of gossamer still lingering on the grass and bushes under the north walls. The colouring of the world was glorious, rich in tones of orange and russet, gaudy in contrast to the blue sky above, and shimmering in the sunlight. Marjorie Aston and her mother sat in the jutting-out square window of Studley Grange, one of those sun-traps our ancestors loved to build. The old farmhouse they had made a very comfortable residence, and Marjorie's artistic tastes had added to its natural picturesqueness. It was on one of Sir Hubert Erle's farms, but the tenant, who rented also the adjoining farm, preferred the modern spick-and-span erection of white brick to be found on the latter, and had willingly sub-let Studley Grange to the Astons. Mrs. Aston would have been hard to move from Cerne after her husband's death. To uproot her altogether would have been cruel, but Studley Grange was near enough to her old home to be as pleasant to her as any abode could be.

To-day, as she sat knitting in the bay-window, her face wore a more than usually peevish and discontented expression. She looked up at Marjorie, busy finishing her sketch for the drawing club of which she was a member, at a table in a good light.

"No letter from Bill again this week, Marjorie. I assure you I never lay my head upon my pillow without thinking that that boy is killed, or murdered, or something. It's very hard when one's only son——Good gracious! What's that?"

A shadow darkened the window, a tall figure stood in front of it, and a cheery voice called:

"May I come in, Mrs. Aston? I see you are 'at home.' This way, eh?"

And Hubert Erle pushed back the lattice casement, which was ajar, and inserting first one long knickerbockered leg and then the other, stood in the little sitting-room.

"Well, Marjorie, how are *you?* Busy as ever. Mrs. Aston, you don't look in the least altered; and what a charming new home!"

"Oh, Hubert!" she grumbled; "to think of our meeting thus! What changes, what losses, what deaths! It's a sad world!"

"Not altogether, Mrs. Aston, and not on this glorious morning, surely? How pretty you've made the house; and the garden, how gay still! The view always was lovely. Tell me, now, as your landlord," he continued, laughing, "is there anything you want done? I never knew a tenant yet but had not some wants!"

This sufficed to set Mrs. Aston off. The list of her grievances and requirements into which she launched out would fill a page. Sir Hubert listened patiently, putting in a cheery remark now and again, and standing behind Marjorie, watching her work.

"You *have* got on, Marjorie! It's awfully pretty; you're quite an artist! (Yes, Mrs. Aston, I quite understand—a new cistern it must be; the old one quite worn out.) Where's the place, Marjorie? I seem to know it—on the river. (Yes, I'll write into Loamhampton about it to-night.) What, the River Seat at Darfield? Ah!"

He stopped, catching his breath. Marjorie's hand shook a little as she plied her brush. It was so familiar and so sweet to have him standing over her thus, and yet so painful.

"I say, Marjorie," he added abruptly; "you might give me that sketch when it's gone round the Club, if you like, eh?"

Before she could reply the door opened, and the maid announced:

"Miss Marshall;" and Effie advanced, *running with* outstretched hands.

"Here I am at last, Marjorie. Oh! Sir Hubert!" with a glad cry of shy surprise. Then she held out her hand, reddening: "I'd no idea you were back again."

"I was coming over this afternoon," he replied, in a low voice (somehow he always dropped his cheery, rather loud, tone in speaking to Effie, Marjorie thought), and then he seated himself in the broad window-sill, with his face to the room, that he might watch Effie. To him, she seemed just what was wanting in the low, dim, old-fashioned apartment—a stray sunbeam, with her golden hair, which had wandered in to brighten it up.

Mrs. Aston and Effie did all the talking. They had much in common over knitting and fancy work, and both loved the sound of their own voices. Sir Hubert sat and looked at Effie, and Marjorie was apparently busy with her painting. But, from this moment onward, how she spoiled what had been a pretty sketch, putting in hap-hazard, in her tension and uneasiness, all sorts of wrong lights and values, smearing here, overdoing there. The production got but few votes when it went on its rounds, and was consigned to the back of the fire by its author on its return.

The conversation was not worth recording. Mrs. Aston's never was at the best of times; and, as for Effie, she usually merely thought aloud. You could watch the play of her innocent little mind while she prattled, much as you can mark the stones in the clear bottom of a little brook that babbles over them. To Marjorie it seemed as if that morning call would never end. One moment it all jarred upon her till she could hardly bear it; the next, she was reproaching herself with selfishness, for were not Effie and Hubert both palpably happy? Did she not know of old the quiet twinkle, the half-smile of complete satisfaction which stole over his face as he sat there, his manly figure, his handsome face, framed in the lattice window, with a background of autumn landscape.

The jingling striking of the "grandfather's clock" up in the corner abruptly disturbed the state of affairs.

Two minutes later, Effie, all flustered and anxious at being late for lunch, was hurriedly saying "Good-bye" to Mrs. Aston.

That lady put down her knitting pins with what she imagined a Machiavelian smile.

"Are you going back alone, my dear young lady? How about that bull—or was it a cow, the other day? Now, if *I* were Sir Hubert, *I* should feel I couldn't do less than see you safe to the river."

"I'm a match for any bull, Miss Marshall. Only try me!" he rejoined.

Effie looked up at him, and laughed a happy little ripple of a laugh.

"And you said you were coming over this afternoon. Why not come back to lunch? We shall be out driving all the afternoon."

"Good idea. I will with pleasure," Hubert hastened to reply. "I wanted—aw—to see Mr. Marshall, about shooting with me—one day next week."

"Then come along," she answered, "or papa will be worrying over what's become of me!"

"What a thing it is to be so precious!" he answered, as they left the room together.

Down on the placid bosom of the More the fish and the insects had mistaken the time of year, and imagined it was summer again. The gnats and the water beetles were waltzing on and above the surface of the water; a shoal of bleak scudded by, flashing out upon them, and making havoc in their midst; while graver perch and pike lay basking in the sun in gravelly bottoms, till all of a sudden fish and insects alike were disturbed by the upward passage of the punt, slowly making for the River Seat.

The conversation had turned, as it often did when they found themselves alone, upon the, to Effie, ever-absorbing topic of their mutual ghost. It was to both a delicious little bit of the past they had in common.

"'MAY I COME IN, MRS. ASTON?'" (*p.* 580).

Hubert liked to watch her tell the story, to notice her round-eyed, childish, make-believe horror, so different from the real awe which had possessed her when she first related it. To her, on the other hand, it gave an indefinable sense of security and confidence to hear his side of the tale. His very presence before her, so big, so strong, so real, seemed to chase away all the supernatural fears which had haunted her.

"To think that it was *you* I was so frightened of!" laughed Effie, leaning back and dabbling one hand in the water. "But I was frightened of you another time, too."

"When was that, eh?" he asked, advancing close to her, as he pushed his pole.

"At that dinner-party at the Bucknalls'," she replied half shyly, looking down and drawing lines along the water.

"What was there so alarming about me?"

"You seemed such a great person, who had seen so much—done such things—and everyone was making much of you!"

"I'm sorry I gave you that impression. But you don't think that of me now?" from the other end of the boat.

"Oh dear no!" laughing. "Why, I feel—I feel as if I had known you all my life!"

"That's all right. How nice that dinner-party was, wasn't it?" coming near again, and looking down upon her.

"Ever so nice! Till then, I thought dinner-parties were always stupid. But then, I've not been to many, you know."

"I have; but never to one I enjoyed so much."

"Really?"

"*Really.* Can't you guess why?" from a distance.

"I—I don't know—quite," hesitatingly.

"Shall I tell you?" he asked, low and earnestly, coming up again and stopping dead short.

But a little frightened look came over her face.

"Oh *please*," she said, in a low voice, "please don't stop! We *are* so late; and see——" she added, turning half round: "there's someone waiting for us at the River Seat!"

Someone, who had been watching them all the way from the bend of the stream, who had marked all the attitudes, and noted all the by-play, and who now, as the boat shot near the bank, withdrew under the hanging weeping willows.

As Sir Hubert Erle stepped ashore, someone advanced out of the shadow of the tree and confronted him.

He looked up, started, and cried aghast—

"Li—Lady Lorrimer!"

"Well, Hubert?" she said, smiling upon him under her lashes. "How do?"

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

"The charm of woven paces and of woven hands."

EFFIE stood on the river bank, and glanced from one to the other in surprise.

"You know each other?" at last she burst out.

Lady Lorrimer smiled down upon her.

"Sir Hubert Erle and I are old friends, my Effie."

Effie smiled all over.

"How nice!" she exclaimed. "I'm so glad!"

And then they all three hurried up the Wilderness path which led from the River Seat to the lawn and to the house. Mr. Marshall was awaiting them in the hall.

"I couldn't imagine where you'd got to, my darling!"

"I've been over to see Marjorie Aston, and—and Sir Hubert brought me home, and will stay to lunch, papa," she said, brightly.

Mr. Marshall's face unclouded again.

It was a very cheerful meal. Lady Lorrimer, with a sympathetic audience, could be extremely entertaining, and in the present instance she exerted herself to the utmost. Mr. Marshall, too, when he was not worried, was a good talker, and a man who had seen much of the world, and he and the widow kept the ball rolling between, while repartee and story flew about the table swiftly.

Sir Hubert was amused and attracted, in spite of himself, as it were. He had started, after the sudden *rencontre*, with being not a little cold and distant to Lady Lorrimer. He did not feel at all at ease with her, and it jarred greatly upon him to find her in this house, and upon such terms of intimacy with Effie. He was not his usual cheery self at all, and somewhat silent during lunch. It would have taken, however, a cleverer, more discerning man, to resist for long Lady Lorrimer's indefinable influence, when she chose to exert it. Gradually and insensibly, he found himself thawing to her. From having, at the first, attempted to keep up a conversation with Effie, leaving the other two to their Indian talk together, he found himself almost imperceptibly drawn into it, and Effie left out in the cold. The girl could take no part whatever in subjects she did not understand, in jokes which were unintelligible, for Effie's horizon, as befitted her age, was naturally limited; and, presently, she found herself sitting dumb at the head of her father's table; a most unusual occurrence with this little chatterbox.

Lunch was a lingering meal.

"You'll smoke?" asked his host of Sir Hubert, as they straggled out into the hall. "Come into the billiard-room."

"And we'll come, too," put in the widow. "You two can have a game, and I'll score for you. Effie, child, how white you look! Head bad again?"

"No, not very," fenced Effie, struggling against it.

"You should go and lie down for half-an-hour, and rest before we drive."

"Oh, Lady Lorrimer!" she pleaded, not in the least wanting to be sent away.

"I'm sure you'd better, or you'll be fit for nothing when we get over to the Gillinghames'. It was the sun on the river this morning; it was quite hot."

"Then that's my fault," protested Sir Hubert, much concerned, and looking anxiously down into the little face. "I'm *so* sorry, Miss Marshall."

This *quite* decided Lady Lorrimer.

"You were such a long time coming up in the punt, weren't you? Such hard work punting against stream! I saw you, Sir Hubert; exerting yourself tremendously," she laughed. "Now run away, Effie darling," and she turned her eyes on the girl.

"But, I assure you——"

"Let me arrange these cushions comfortably for you to rest in this big chair, where you can watch us?" proffered Sir Hubert.

"Nonsense, child! be sensible, and go," said Lady Lorrimer, stroking the fair hair with her jewelled hand.

And Effie walked slowly to the door without another word, and vanished.

"She'll come down quite fresh and bonnie again," said Lady Lorrimer, "and Master Arthur Gillinghame will find her charming! Was that three to you, Mr. Marshall, eh?"

But Sir Hubert was a little annoyed, and for some minutes smoked and played on in silence. With Effie's departure, however, the conversation soon turned again into more amusing channels. Lady Lorrimer sat on the high divan by the scoring-board, looking down upon the players from under her lashes, and keeping them alive with her sallies, and Mr. Marshall, who was devoted to billiards, played his best against no mean competitor, and felt very satisfied with himself and the world.

Into this pleasant state of things entered Simmons, the butler, bearing a message. Someone was waiting below to speak to Mr. Marshall.

"Will you excuse me a few minutes?" the latter said to his guests. "I must see this man before the post goes out."

"I'll take your cue while you are gone," said Lady Lorrimer. "Sir Hubert knows I can play a bit;" and she rose languidly from the divan, and bent over the table. "Do you remember," she added, as the door closed behind Mr. Marshall, "that ladies' dinner-party at the Highlanders' mess, where we played billiards after dinner?" and she paused in the act of striking the ball, and lifted her eyelids slowly, and looked Sir Hubert meaningly in the face.

"It seems a long time ago," said the other uneasily, chalking the top of his cue nervously, and avoiding her gaze.

"Not so *very* long, either," she went on, in a low eager tone, in strange contrast to her usual drawl, and leaning against the table. "Not a year—not a year, even! It *was* nice in Malta last winter, wasn't it?"

"Yes," he assented slowly, and half unwillingly.

"The picnics, the drives with the Tandem Club (how good a whip you are, Hubert!), and the walks back from parties in the moonlight!"

"What's the good of calling up all that is past, Lilah?" he asked half irritably. "Let the dead past bury its dead."

"Why should it? It's not so long ago, you know. We have not changed. I—I—don't think I have grown uglier, eh?" and she came up and stood close beside him, and smiled, showing her white teeth.

"No, no, not that," he said, unable to resist looking at her: "but what is done cannot be undone. It's all over!"

And he began aimlessly to hit the balls about the table.

She came nearer again, leaning over, and laying her hand on his arm.

"Why should you speak like that, Hubert?" she asked low and quickly. "It is cruel, unfeeling! Have you forgotten, can you forget—I can't—that night you saw me home after that dinner at the mess? Oh! I can see it all now again—the tall palaces shimmering in the moonlight, the women in their black cloaks, the streets of steps, the dark sea—can't you? I can remember how you looked, what you said."

Hubert Erle writhed.

"Lilah"—he turned and faced her almost defiantly—"shall I tell you what I *do* remember? A cruel woman, who had played for weeks and weeks with something called a man's heart, and who, when he offered it her, turned upon him, and laughed at him! Who was cruel? who unfeeling?"

She dropped her eyes before his gaze, and her breath came quick. When he paused, as if demanding an answer, those eyes had changed in their expression. They were wide open, and if such a thing were possible with Lilah Lorrimer's steely dark-lashed orbs, they might have been thought to be dewy and soft, and appealing in their gaze.

"Hubert," she whispered, "you are unmanly. You—you hurt me!"

"I beg your pardon, Lilah"—he had softened instantly beneath this unaccustomed tenderness. "I—I—For Heaven's sake, Lilah, let us speak of this no more!" he went on hurriedly, pushing back the hair from his forehead with a worried gesture. "What on earth is the good of raking all this up? It pains you—pains us both. Heaven knows it pained me enough at the time, but I had almost forgotten—no, not forgotten—forgiven, I meant to say; and now, to see you again, to hear you talk like this——"

"That's just what it is, Hubert," she interrupted. "Now I *do* see you again, it wakes up all the old memories, and they sting into me, oh! painfully, painfully! But if you only will say you forgive me?" and she looked up again, and laid her hand almost timidly on his arm.

"Lilah, Lilah," he answered, gravely, "you little dream what a love mine was if you think that I couldn't forgive *you anything*, up to all time!"

The door opened as he spoke. She sprang from his side, and struck a ball hastily. It was Effie's maid.

"Please, m'lady, Miss Marshall's sent down to say that her head is so bad that she has not slept at all, and does not feel able to drive this afternoon."

"Dear, dear!" sighed Mr. Marshall, who had also entered.

"We must go without her, then, I fear," exclaimed Lady Lorrimer. "But first, I will run up and see if I can do anything for her. Good-bye, Sir Hubert. We shall see you again soon, I suppose?" and letting

"'EFFIE, DEAREST, WHAT IS THE MATTER?'" (*p.* 586).

her hand linger just perceptibly in his, she sailed out of the room.

Effie lay upon the sofa in a charming little boudoir her father had furnished for her, clad in a pale blue wrapper, and her masses of fair hair down and strewn over the silk pillows. Her eyes glistened, and her brow was contracted with pain. Lady Lorrimer came and knelt by her side.

"Shall I try and make you better?" she asked, in a low, but firm voice, looking steadily at her with eyes wide open this time.

"It *is* better now you've come," murmured Effie half dreamily, staring up at her. "I think—I could—go to sleep."

"You are—going to sleep—going to sleep," repeated the other, very slowly, pushing back as she spoke the loose sleeve of the tea-gown, and beginning, slowly and steadily, to rub the bare white arm up and down from elbow to arm-pit. "Go to sleep, Effie, go to sleep," she added, slowly, not taking her eyes off her.

In a few moments the eyes grew calm, the lids drooped, closed altogether, and the regular breathing told that Effie slept.

"Don't disturb Miss Marshall till she rings," was Lady Lorrimer's injunction to the maid waiting without. Then she went to her own room, and summoned Rosalie to dress her for the drive to the Gillinghames': a somewhat lengthy process, and attended with not a few mysteries, known only to mistress and maid.

When Rosalie had gone down to the hall, carrying the fur-lined wrap for the chill autumn evening, Lady Lorrimer lingered a moment or two contemplating her own handsome reflection in the cheval glass.

"Little fool of a baby face! To think that she could possibly stand up against me, even if—even if I had not the power! And you, Hubert Erle, too. How long will you hold out, I wonder? Which has the stronger will—which the deeper passion? In Malta it was *you*, most decidedly. But I *did* care for you, Hubert, all through, though I made you believe I did not; and I care more *now!* Oh! why did not some prophet forecast for me that that elder brother was going to get himself drowned, and my penniless subaltern—but it is not too late! I can't have it too late," she added vehemently, taking up a powder-puff and dabbing her cheek. "I'm in too much of a hole: in great extremities! I don't know where to turn, how to raise another shilling! This child, with her wealth, and her life just opening, must stand aside. She'll soon get over this little *tendresse*—but *I* have no time to spare. Ah, Hubert! Hubert! the flame is only smouldering, not quenched; I saw it in your eyes. Just a little judicious fanning," she added to herself, with a sly little thin smile, as she swept down the stairs to join Mr. Marshall on the front steps.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

"Ye know not what ye ask!"

FOR a few lovely days Indian summer wrapped the valley of the More. The genial sunshine somewhat dried up the pervading dampness, and tinted the woods, the hedges, and the bracken with brighter and lighter tints of yellow. A stillness hung over the land, for the birds were growing very mute, except the rooks, busy foraging in newly-ploughed upland pastures. So still was it in quiet gardens, that the summer flowers, all tattered and dishevelled with the equinoctial gales, took heart and grace, and burst into unexpected blooms. But in one night came a change! Towards sunset the wind began to sough in the west, and the sun sank in an ever-growing bank of clouds. The moon rose, no longer lurid and stately, but pale and timid, scudding behind the sweeping clouds, and the wind rose with it. By midnight a wild sou'-wester was raging.

The next morning, what a wreck and ruin! The "flying dust of the golden woodland" was driving from the thinning branches over soaked lawn and muddy road. Gone were the blossoms, vanished every sign and vestige of summer.

Marjorie Aston, who was a great gardener, sighed as she opened the farm-house door, and gazed around on the havoc a single night had wrought in the little garden she tended so carefully.

"Even my Jackmanii torn down in this snug corner!" she exclaimed, picking up the trailing tendrils which lay prone upon the garden path. "This must be nailed up again as soon as possible. But duty first, and pleasure afterwards;" and she set out up to the village to see some sick people, bearing in her hand the little round basket containing a covered jar with something nice in it, which was a familiar object in almost every sick room in Cerne.

Round the turn which led to Great Morchard Bridge suddenly swept a carriage. Marjorie recognised it in a moment; it was the Darfield wagonette and pair, Mr. Marshall himself driving, and inside Effie and Lady Lorrimer. There was a hasty greeting as they dashed past; a smile and a wave from Effie, who, Marjorie thought, looked white in her furs, and then, when the carriage had passed on some little way, Marjorie could not resist turning her head to see where it was going. It had halted at the Avenue lodge, and the gates were opening to admit it.

A rush of grief and mortification passed over poor Marjorie. In her despair she seemed to hear again Sir Hubert's words: "You see, I can't well get Miss Marshall unless there's another lady!" He had intended to mean her, and sad enough had Marjorie been to find she was only being made use of. But now she felt she would only have been too glad to be of use to him. He no longer wanted her, however; he had got Lady Lorrimer as chaperone; he had forgotten all about his invitation to Marjorie.

The tears would well up and blur everything before her. She had to blink them back with decision ere she could see to open the latch of a cottage door.

A little later she was wending her way homeward, when out of a cottage rushed Mr. Adams's thin frame and long coat, and advanced towards her.

"Good-morning, Miss Aston. You are homeward bound? May I walk a bit of the way with you?—I am low and worried, and the mere talking to you seems to brighten me up," said the young clergyman, smiling upon her a tired smile.

"Certainly, Mr. Adams. I myself am just in the mood for a companion. This sudden return to winter is most depressing."

"Well, now, I should have thought that a nature like yours was never troubled with bad spirits; you always seem to shed calm and brightness wherever you are, Miss Aston."

"But what's been going wrong now?" she interrupted; for things were often going wrong in Mr. Adams's eyes.

"Oh, everything! The apathy, the ignorance, the prejudice of these Loamshire people, irritates me sometimes beyond endurance! They are so slow, so indolent, mentally and physically. I feel all the time as if I were hurling myself against a brick wall in my efforts to stir them up," sighed the young rector.

"It's the climate of this alluvial valley, the dampness of the soil. Think how far we are from any city. To these people Loamhampton is the metropolis, Loamshire the world."

"I know, I know. It is all the very opposite of Birmingham, of course, and I ought to realise it more, I suppose. But at Birmingham, as a curate, I had less responsibility. Here it weighs upon me, the responsibility, night and day, and I eat my heart out trying to meet it."

"But why work so hard at a complete and radical change?" said Miss Aston gravely, but kindly. "Why not engraft your own notions gradually on to the existing state of affairs? Why cut down root and branch? I am a bit of a gardener, you know. Here our lives run very placidly and our natures are slow, I suppose. We take after our quiet old river More," she added, with a smile.

"Perhaps," he replied. "It is a happy thing, I suppose. Myself, I don't seem to know now what peace means. I am always feeling dissatisfied, restless. Now, you, Miss Aston, I should imagine, with your calm, sweet nature, you never knew what it was to be irritated, wounded; you never had a worry in the world, I should think?" he added, looking down into the soft dark eyes, which were bent on the ground before her, but which refused to meet his.

She smiled a little sadly.

"Oh, Mr. Adams, you don't know! I'm by no means the saint you make out! But there," she added, thinking the conversation growing somewhat too confidential, "is the Rectory gate, and I am not going to take you any further from your dinner."

"Ah! Miss Aston, my solitary meal is a very movable feast!"

"But it shouldn't be. Perhaps you'd feel happier if you paid more attention to your dining and take a more cheerful view of life;" and she smiled and nodded at him as she turned off down the by-road to Studley Grange.

"I try to tell her that it's love, and she insinuates that it's dyspepsia!" sighed the young rector to himself, ruefully, as he entered his own gate.

In the afternoon, Marjorie, armed with a hammer and a pair of steps, and girt with a gardener's apron, with pockets full of nails and shreds of cloth, went for that poor prone Jackmanii, as she had promised herself. She was a great believer, for all her preaching to Mr. Adams, in hard work, especially as a cure for mental worry. So she was hammering vigorously when steps came down the path, and Effie Marshall's voice called to her.

"Oh! is that you, dear?" cried Marjorie, looking down upon the little figure from the top of the steps. "I've just finished. Go in and talk to mother, and I'll come to you."

"But I don't want to talk to your mother; I want to talk to *you*," replied Effie, in rather a disconsolate tone.

Marjorie gave another glance, and saw that the girl looked very miserable. There was a pained, harassed look on her face, generally so sunny, such as Marjorie had never seen there before.

"Certainly, dear Effie. This is the last tendril, and then we will sit in the porch."

The porch at Studley Grange was a porch indeed: square and solid, of brickwork, with paved floor and broad seats on either side, and so large, that in warm weather it almost acted as another sitting-room for drinking tea and for working in. Marjorie swept some dead leaves off the bench on to which they had been whirled by the gale in the night, and sitting down, drew Effie to her side.

"What is the matter, dear child?" she began in her gentle, soothing tones. "Have you not been up to the Court to lunch?"

"Oh yes; but—but—I wanted to talk to you, and I made them let me walk home. Papa has driven Lady Lorrimer back, and I must not stay long, for he is coming to fetch me at the river path."

She spoke in a weary tone, which was a pathetic contrast to her sunny childish prettiness, and leant her fair-haired head back against the dark oak door-post of the porch as if tired.

"But, Effie dearest, what is the matter? Something is, I am sure! What is it you want to tell me?"

"Everything is the matter," replied Effie miserably, "everything—since Lady Lorrimer came."

"But I thought she was a great friend of yours, Effie? that you were so fond of her?"

"Fond? no, fond is not the word, Marjorie. I admire her, look up to her, fear her, if you will," with a slight shudder, "not love her! I can't really explain what it is. No one ever seemed to have quite the same influence, power—I don't know how to express it—over me. She is so strong, and I am so weak, so helpless, when she is there. But fond, oh, no! and not now."

"Why not now, Effie?"

"Oh! everything has gone wrong," moaned the girl, "since she came. I was so happy, so happy—happier than I've ever been in all my life, I think. I know I'm very young, and rather silly, people think (though Sir Hubert said *he* didn't think so), but I can't help what I feel, and I was *so* happy! You see, I've met very few men, and never one like *him* before."

"Ha!" came involuntarily from the other girl.

"And *he* didn't think me silly—he said so; and then, one day, on the river he looked so strange and earnest (quite a different look to any I ever saw on him before; one you don't know at all), and I almost think—perhaps—he was going to—he meant to—say something. But, somehow, I got suddenly all frightened, and—and I stopped him! And now, oh! oh! Marjorie, it's all altered!"

"How all altered? Has he altered?" asked Marjorie, in a low voice, looking across the ruined garden to the damp meadows, where the mists were beginning to rise.

"It's Lady Lorrimer, it is," the girl went on, with a shiver. "She seems to have come between us. I can't explain exactly how, but I see it, and feel it, every moment that we are all together. She is an old friend of his, Marjorie, she says; they seem to have a past, a secret, of which I know nothing. She seems almost to hold him in her grasp as she holds me, as if with an iron vice—riveting one. When she is there, he—he—he doesn't seem to care for me at all!"

And Effie suddenly broke down and bursting into hysterical weeping, became inaudible. It was useless, Marjorie soon found, to reason or argue with her. Effie lay sobbing on her shoulder like a tired child, without any self-control. There was nothing for it

but to let her have her cry out, while the afternoon drew in and the wind wailed from the river.

Gradually Effie grew calmer from sheer physical fatigue.

"My poor little Effie!" Marjorie was saying, softly stroking her little wet cheek. "My darling little girlie! I am *so* sorry for you, Effie; oh! you don't know how sorry, you can't know how sorry! I wish I could help you, comfort you, darling!" she sighed.

"But can't you, Marjorie? Won't you? Oh, you will!"

"If I knew how, Effie," sadly.

"You can't help me with *her*," replied the latter, shaking her head mournfully: "nobody can help me with *her*, I feel. But *you* can with *him?*"

"*I* can with *him?*" repeated Marjorie, bewildered.

"You can indeed. You are strong, Marjorie, and you are good. You and he are old friends; can't you explain to him, tell him, let him know how happy I was, and how—how miserable I am now? Can't you make it all right again?"

Marjorie could bear it no longer. She was feeling stifled. Rising, she went and stood in the open doorway of the porch, drawing long laboured breaths of the still wild sou'-wester. Effie followed her, and clung to her.

"Marjorie, you will do what you can? You will help? Oh! Marjorie! I—I love him so!"

Marjorie felt for one moment as if the ground was giving way under her feet. She clutched at the old doorpost for support; but the next she had recovered herself.

Bending down, she kissed the little face turned up so pleadingly to hers.

"Yes, Effie," she murmured; "I will."

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

"Whispering tongues can poison truth."

THE usually placid old More was quite excited. As Marjorie drove over the long bridge at Great Morchard she looked down on to the stream, turbid and swollen after the late storm, and swirling under the black wooden piers. She had been over to call on Mrs. Bucknall, and the old pony was taking her home again up the hill to Cerne with rather more than his usual deliberation. Marjorie knew that any attempt to hurry him would be useless, so she let him take his own pace, vaguely herself looking at the rapidly thinning coppices on either hand, where the brown fern lay beaten down with the storm. It was a dull, damp, late afternoon, not at all out of keeping with Marjorie's thoughts, which were none of the most cheerful.

Suddenly, at a corner of the wood, the old pony gave a most unusual start at an unexpected sound. It was that of a little volley of guns, discharged almost simultaneously, while over the stile, into the road, came a couple of keepers, some dogs, a little group of beaters, and finally, after an interval, the sportsmen themselves: Sir Hubert Erle, Mr. Blayke, young Gillinghame, and a couple of others. The shooting party was breaking up.

As Marjorie came up with them she tried to flick on the old pony and to hurry past, but in vain. The hill was not yet surmounted, and nothing would induce that sagacious quadruped to go out of a walk, and Sir Hubert, on perceiving her, came up and began to talk.

"Have you had a good day?" asked Marjorie.

"Pretty well. But the birds are rather wild after this bad weather, and I've been shooting very badly myself—don't know what it is; not a bit steady."

"What a pity! Perhaps you'll do better to-morrow," said Marjorie, just by way of saying something.

"Oh! to-morrow I'm going over to Darfield to stay for a couple of nights! Mr. Marshall has a big shoot on."

Marjorie gave a start. With a sudden rush her promise to Effie came into her mind, and her heart sank in despair.

"Now is your chance," Conscience whispered; "*now* you must do it!" while her heart cried out in anguish at the self-sacrifice.

"To Darfield, to stay?" she repeated, slowly, looking down on Sir Hubert, walking by the side of the little carriage. "Oh! I'm sorry to hear that!"

Sir Hubert looked up at her sharply.

"Why, Marjorie, why? What do you mean? Why should I not go and stay at Darfield?"

"Because—because——oh! Sir Hubert, don't be angry with me; I'm speaking like the old friends we are——" she spoke hurriedly, incoherently, afraid within herself lest her courage should give way ere her task was accomplished.

"Of course, Marjorie, and I'm not angry; but you might explain, I think;" he spoke a shade nettled.

"And I am Effie's friend too, you see; and poor little Effie is very young and very—very—sensitive, while Lady Lorrimer is—how shall I put it?—very attractive, Sir Hubert."

He had stopped short while she spoke, scanning her eagerly for a moment. Then he walked on hurriedly, frowning a little.

"And Effie is—is not happy, Sir Hubert," Marjorie concluded, very low.

She thought he had taken it amiss, and to have angered him, she said to herself, made it all the worse. For a few moments he did not speak. They had reached the top of the hill, the pony was preparing to jog on again, when Sir Hubert turned and looked up at Marjorie.

"I see—I see!" he said, with a pained groan. "Oh, Marjorie, you don't know! No, I'm not angry at all," he went on, wearily; "I'm only just—torn in two, bothered to pieces——" he added, looking so harassed that her heart bled for him, and she could not bear it any longer, and almost involuntarily flicked her reins.

"Must you be getting on? Well, good-night, then. And, Marjorie, thanks, thanks awfully! You always

were a good friend to me, you know," he called after her, with a rather weary smile.

And these last words seemed to Marjorie the hardest to bear of any part of her self-imposed torture.

A few days later at Darfield Hall the shooting party were getting ready for starting. The gentlemen had breakfasted alone, as was the custom, neither their young hostess nor Lady Lorrimer having put in an appearance. The men, who came from a distance, had driven up and descended from their vehicles, and outside, on the drive, keepers and hangers-on were already assembling. In the dining-room, Mr. Marshall was bestowing refreshment on the newly-arrived, but Sir Hubert Erle found himself temporarily alone in the big hall, when down the broad oak stairs came a patter of little feet, and Effie herself, fresh and fair, in a pretty morning gown, descended upon him.

Since his arrival the evening before, they had not been a moment alone together; Lady Lorrimer had taken care of that. Effie's face became radiant now as Sir Hubert advanced towards her.

"The top o' the mornin' to ye, Miss Marshall!" he laughed. "Are you going to come out with our lunch and to walk with us to-day?"

They were standing in the deep window, and the pale autumn sunlight stole in and glinted her pretty hair.

"I—I don't know. Shall I?" and she looked up at him bewitchingly.

"*Do*," was his only response, but he managed to put a great deal of meaning into it as he looked down at her.

"I'll see if Lady Lorrimer will like to come," she began, half nervously, fidgeting under his prolonged gaze.

Marjorie's words flashed into his mind. He came a step nearer, and spoke earnestly.

"Bother Lady Lorrimer!" he said. "Miss Marshall, don't you—won't you understand that I want *you* to come?"

She gave almost a little cry of joy, and looked up again wistfully, and then shook her head sadly.

"Oh! Sir Hubert——"

"But it is true, *quite* true, if you'd *only* believe ——"

"Please, Sir 'Ubert," and Simmons the butler approached solemnly, "Mr. Marshall wished me to say as they was movin' h'off."

And without another word Hubert had to hurry away, leaving Effie standing there in the window, her little head in a whirl, her heart full of intoxicating joy.

Lady Lorrimer, coming downstairs, presently saw her still standing there, looking down the drive, perfectly radiant.

"This comes of not getting up in the morning," said that lady to herself. "'The early bird, etc., etc.' But we'll see, Sir Hubert, we'll see!"

She strolled over to the large oak table which stood in the middle of the hall, and on which each morning the products of the mail-bag were laid out for their owners to claim them.

"What a chaos of letters and papers, some opened and left! How on earth is one to find one's belongings?" she grumbled to Effie, who came up to her. "What untidy beings men are, leaving things in such a mess!"

"And here's a telegram lying open! I wonder whose it is?" said Effie.

"For me, perhaps, from Madame Chiffon. Read, Effie. Telegrams I always consider public property, you know."

"But, Lady Lorrimer——"

"Rubbish! Somebody may be dead or wanting to be met at the station;" and she took up the pink paper and read it out:

"I expect you without fail on Friday, usual place.—MAY."

"Decidedly not for me," she sneered. "It's to some man, of course. Oh! here," she added, laying down the telegram, and taking up the orange envelope; "it's for Sir Hubert Erle!"

The girl behind her gave a sharp cry of pain and remained transfixed, her eyes staring at the pencil words on the pink paper. Lady Lorrimer shot a swift glance at her from under her lashes, and then deliberately read the telegram over again, with an emphasis on certain words. "'*I* expect *you* without *fail* on Friday, *usual* place. *May*'; she who must be obeyed, eh? Well, Sir Hubert!" she added, with a little sneering laugh.

To her intense surprise Effie turned abruptly away and sinking into the deep window seat, covered her face with her hands and burst into a passion of tears.

"Effie! be quiet; the servants will hear you!" remonstrated Lady Lorrimer, standing over her.

"I can't—I—I can't," sobbed the girl, hysterically, yet struggling for calmness. "I was—was *so* happy—he was just s—saying—and now—to r—read that—oh, it's terrible!" and she sobbed again, convulsively. The sudden revulsion of feeling had been too much for her nervous temperament.

Just for one second, at those last words, Lady Lorrimer's eyes flashed triumphantly. The next she had seated herself quickly by Effie, and taken her hand in one of hers, while with the other she stroked her hair gently and regularly.

"My poor child, you are overwrought, and you want your breakfast. Why, Effie, you must expect this sort of thing with men—they're all alike!"

Effie groaned feebly.

"Indeed they are. You can't trust any of them. And *you* least of all, my poor little heiress, you know——"

Effie ceased sobbing a second, and stared up at her with frightened eyes, inquiringly.

"Indeed, indeed, it is so," continued Lady Lorrimer slowly, not pausing a moment in the stroking the fair hair. "Your money, child, is the attraction, while this 'May,' whoever she is——"

She stopped abruptly, for Effie suddenly sank back as if lifeless, her eyes wide open, staring and fixed.

"Whew!" whistled Lady Lorrimer to herself. "I've overdone it this time, I'm afraid. Cataleptic, I think!"

She took the slight little figure in her arms unresisted. To all appearance Effie might have been dead, so white her face, so fixed her eyes, but the limbs were flexible. Lady Lorrimer laid her on her side on the broad window-sill, unloosed her dress, and for at least five minutes rubbed her spine firmly and briskly up and down. Presently she was very relieved to find Effie breathing once more, though faintly and irregularly, and to see her eyes moving again.

Then she called to Simmons, waiting in the dining-room patiently all this time.

"Miss Marshall is feeling faint," she said. "Call her maid and my Rosalie;" and when the maids arrived, and found Effie herself again, but weak and hysterical, she ordered her to be carried up to bed and dosed with beef-tea.

Then she went into the dining-room herself, and made a very good breakfast.

END OF CHAPTER THE TENTH.

ABOARD A THAMES STEAMER.

BY F. M. HOLMES.

TING-a-ting-ting! Full speed ahead! And away glides the pretty little steamer on the broad bosom of old Father Thames, almost as gracefully as a bird on the wing.

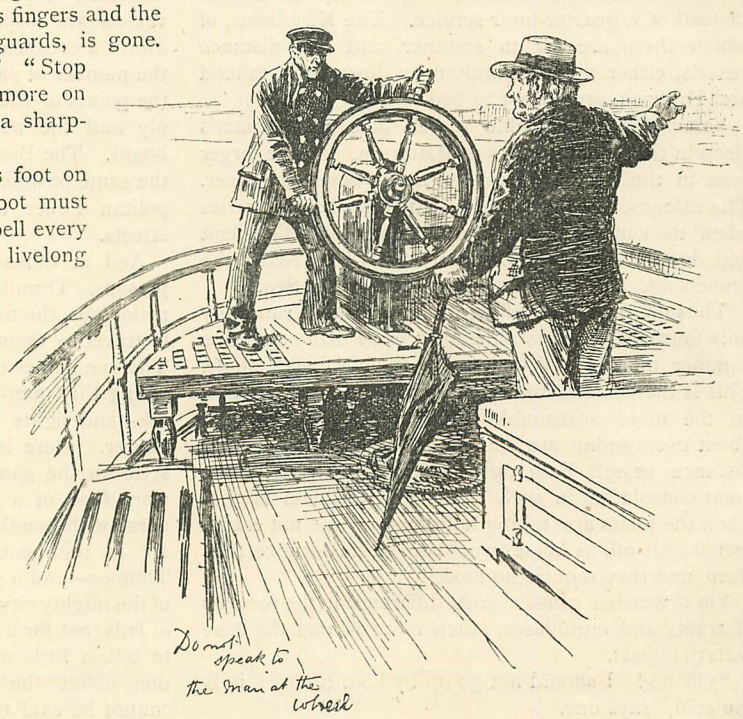
We pass that picturesque, but slow-moving, old hay barge in a trice: it looks like a floating stack washed out of its native field in a flood; Cleopatra's Needle rises in the bright panorama on the north bank, and a moment more we shoot past it to Charing Cross; but ting! the little engines go slow; ting, ting! they stop dead; ting, ting, ting! they whirl backwards, and we are sidling up to a pier, something like a shy boy to his first love at a rustic flower-show! The paddle-wheels churn up the dirty water into white foam—like soap-suds, as a delighted child described it to his mother—and hallo! here we are at the next pier.

Then, ting-a-ting-ting! again, and off we glide, with all the other tings to follow. The young monkey of a call-boy, with one eye for the captain's fingers and the other for possible purchasers of hat-guards, is gone. His shrill shouts of "Ease her!" "Stop her!" "Go ahead!" are heard no more on most of the Thames steamers, and a sharp-toned gong-bell has taken his place.

The bell is worked by the captain's foot on the little bridge. How tired that foot must become, continually ting-tinging that bell every other minute or so throughout the livelong day! Yet in its shiny boot—all the river captains' boots are so shiny—the foot remains for ever on the push-knob of the bell, ever ready to ting-ting its master's instructions to the engine-room beneath.

And often he has the wheel on the bridge also wherewith to steer his steamer. All the good man's muscles seem engaged except those of the poor left leg. His right has become the call-boy with the bell, his hands grasp the spokes of the wheel, his keen eyes interrogate the river in front, but the poor left leg has nothing to do. Would it not be well to get up a society to employ that poor left leg? We have now a society for almost everything under the sun—the exaggeration of the healthy spirit of co-operation. The river captain cannot even pace the bridge with his shiny boots—provokingly shiny if the streets are muddy in London—for he is chained by the invisible ties of duty to his wheel and his bell, except in the case of a few of the older boats. Some of these yet remain with wheel mounted at the stern, but the present energetic owners are fast renewing their fleet, and placing larger and every way more commodious vessels on the beloved and grimy Thames.

Marvellously well does the keen-eyed captain navigate his fast little craft. The river rushes through the bridge-piers like a mill-race; huge unwieldly barges will get in the way, like timid passengers in crowded



streets ; but who ever hears of an accident to a penny steamer on the flowing Thames? Quiet, able, self-possessed, the captain knows his work, and does it. He has his swift little steamer under perfect control, and up and down the river he glides from Battersea to famed London Bridge, with sometimes three hundred to four hundred persons aboard—the cabman and 'busman combined of London's silent highway.

From Hampton down to Southend you can travel in the river steamers—in the summer-time. In fact, you can go farther, right round the north coast to Clacton and to Harwich. In the winter the points are from Battersea to Greenwich. There is one service from Battersea to London Bridge—nearly the whole way for a familiar brown penny ; there is another little fleet plying down the Pool below London Bridge to Greenwich. Then in the summer there are the up-river boats to Kew and long-distance boats to Hampton, and down the river to Gravesend, Southend, Clacton, and Harwich.

But the points from Battersea to London Bridge and down the Pool to Greenwich are the boundaries of the penny boats that add so much to London's much-needed means of locomotion. And as a far greater number of persons are likely to travel in the spring and summer than in the darker and chillier months of winter—though even then the cabins of the new boats are snug and comfortable—the service is materially altered.

Thus in winter only eight "penny" boats ply up and down between Battersea and London Bridge, instead of fourteen, as in the summer months. These eight maintain a quarter-hour service instead of ten minutes, as in the summer. The Greenwich boats are also reduced in numbers from nine to six, and give a half-hour instead of a quarter-hour service. The Kew boats, of which there are six in summer, and long-distance vessels, either up to Hampton or down to Southend and Harwich, are all put to bed.

Some of these enviable vessels take their winter's sleep in the owners' docks at Battersea, and the larger ones in the Victoria Graving Dock down the river. The saloons, that have carried so many happy parties when the sun is hot and the days are long, lie silent and deserted now, while winter winds roar round the funnels and lash up the waters of the North Sea.

Thus in the depth of winter the owners run daily only fourteen steamers altogether, or as many as in the summer months ply on one of their "lines" alone. This is the busiest, from Battersea to London Bridge. In the more seasonable weather, on the contrary, about twenty-nine are run daily, excluding the long-distance vessels both up and down the river. The great consolation in such a variable business is that when the boats are taking holiday they are not eating their heads off, as horses would do. Like dormice, they sleep, and they require no food.

Yet if weather cause a great difference in the receipts of trams and omnibuses, much more is this the case with the boats.

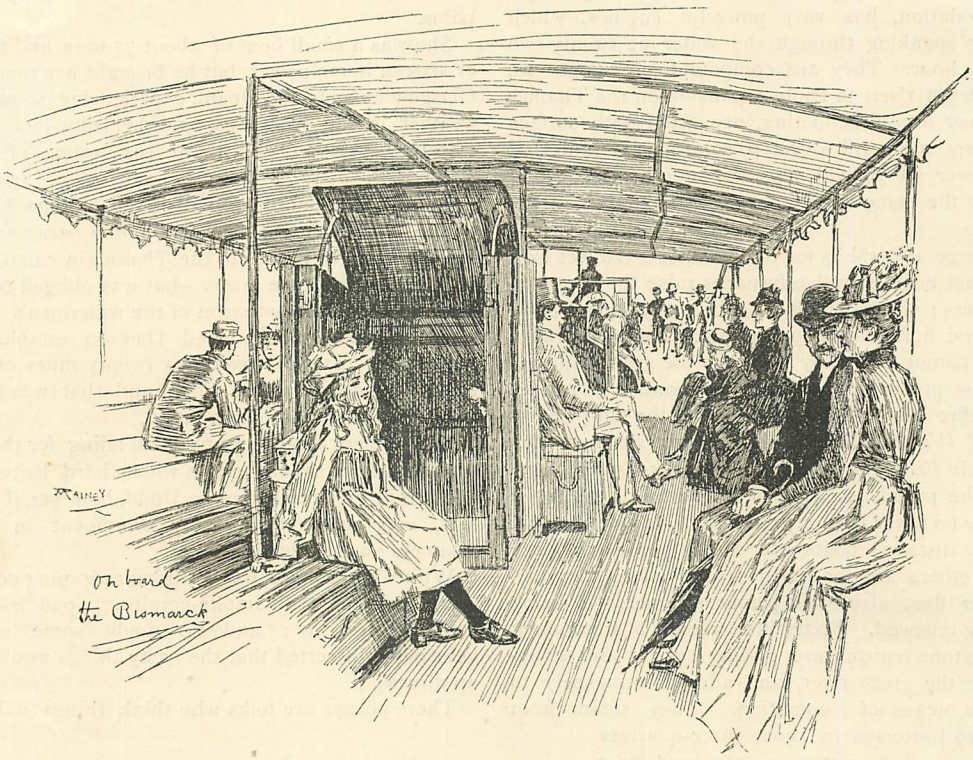
"Oh no! I should not go up by boat to-day; it is too cold," says one.

And if the adventurous youth persists in his audacious enterprise, he will probably find the decks nearly deserted. The decks, yes ; but if he step below he will find—if the boat be one of the newer vessels—a commodious cabin, perhaps even a glowing stove, and probably a solemn company sitting round the sides. Mothers with their babies, men reading papers, and this afternoon a boy with his head and shoulders thrust through one of the open port-hole windows, and hugely enjoying the view of the Thames from this novel point of vantage. Wherever there are active young monkeys of boys there is generally something interesting going on, even if it may not accord with the strictest ideas of kid glove propriety.

Once upon a time there was a Greenwich and Woolwich Steam Packet Company ; once upon a time there was a "Citizen" line of penny steamers; and once upon a time a further fleet belonging to yet a third ownership. Now, after various vicissitudes, the whole of the Thames boats—with a few exceptions—belong to the vigorous Victoria Steamboat Association, which is undoubtedly fast improving the service. The Association, of which Mr. Arnold E. Williams is the managing director, pursued a wise policy some three or four years ago of introducing new and improved vessels, giving comfortable accommodation at cheap fares for what may be called the business and regular traffic through the heart of London, as well as improved service for the long-distance journeys. It has now a fine fleet, suitable for different parts of the river, of forty-six vessels, and has put on the river ten new steamers and also imported the *Lord of the Isles* in the space of about three years.

The penny boats have crews of six or seven men, including captain, fireman, and engineman. The vessels are inspected by the Board of Trade, who award a certificate stating the strength of the crew and the number of passengers the craft may carry ; further, the points of the river between which the boat may ply and the number of life-belts it must keep on board. The Board of Trade, therefore, occupies much the same position to the river steamers as the Metropolitan Police to the trams and omnibuses of the streets.

And at times these boats carry vast numbers of persons. Omniboats, someone called them; and if not melodious, the name is appropriate. All classes seem to travel by them. Look around on this fine afternoon. The sun shines on the glossy silk hat of a prosperous young City man—a lawyer, let us say, from the Temple—and lights up the dingy raiment of a soiled labourer. Here is a lady in furs marching in stately style up the gangway ; she will not be far from the worn face of a thin working woman or of a bulky dame with bundles. Here is a clergyman taking the air in the boat, and looking at London from the Thames—and a very good way, too, to see some part of the mighty city. Here, again, is a lady with a couple of lads, out for a holiday ; she is very good, but, truth to tell, a little mixed in her remarks. Her information about the obelisk called Cleopatra's Needle cannot be said to be exactly accurate. She descants



immensely on the fine blocks of St. Thomas's Hospital, but turns her back in great scorn on the more beautiful and at least equally interesting Houses of Parliament; while we fear she is hopelessly at sea when opposite the Shot Tower, or the clever arrangements for the speedy unlading of large quantities of coal at Lord Londonderry's wharves. Never mind: many other persons are doubtless in equal ignorance; she is good at heart, if shaky in Thames knowledge.

How the sun glints and flashes on the towers of the Parliament Houses as we glide along! Do not tell me that London is not beautiful. It has not the beauty of the wild moor or of the sublime mountain, but it has a fascination all its own. Sometimes the vista of the river and the superb masses of fine buildings around it are softened and veiled in a golden haze that touches the whole with ethereal splendour. Memories of a far-away past cluster round these banks, and blend with the most modern inventions of to-day. Old Roman coins in numbers have been dredged up from the mud of the Thames; the new colossal Tower Bridge spans the great river, hard by the old Norman Tower, whence it takes its name; the ancient Abbey of Westminster looks down on New Scotland Yard; and the noble Embankment, with its pleasant gardens, fronts Somerset House and the old York Watergate. The past and the present meet and mingle round the classic river, which cleaves the metropolis in twain.

Old Swan is the busiest pier. It is the centre of the Association's system, and the "London" which the men shout out on piers above and below. A country cousin would be astonished to hear the lusty cries of "Now for London!" when he is, say, on Charing Cross or Temple Pier.

"Why, am I not in London now?" he would ask in astonishment.

Yes, he is in London; but the London of the watermen is short for London Bridge, which seems the centre for the river folk, even as Charing Cross, or the Bank, or the General Post Office is for others. Everything on the river is above or below bridge—*the* bridge being famous London Bridge. "Surrey side," too, is the pier on the Surrey side of the same ancient bridge. In Thames lingo Surrey side does not mean, as the uninitiated might suppose, the Surrey bank.

So at London—*i.e.*, Old Swan Pier by London Bridge, you are at the heart and centre of all things on the river. Here starts the *Cardinal Wolsey* for its delightful up-river excursions past lovely Kew and Richmond, and here also, start the down-river boats to Greenwich, and further yet, to Gravesend and Southend, Clacton and Harwich. Yes, the truly lordly *Lord of the Isles* starts from here as well as the pretty little penny steamers to the next pier and up to Chelsea.

The *Lord of the Isles* came hither from the Clyde, and startled Londoners by offering to take them round into the North Sea to Harwich and back, a distance of two hundred miles, in one day and for five shillings. Cheap enough travelling, surely! But even this fine boat is now eclipsed. The *Koh-i-noor* is even finer

still. This splendid new vessel, built entirely of steel, most luxuriously furnished and offering ample accommodation, has very powerful engines, which send her spanking through the water at twenty-two miles an hour. They are compound, of course—we have not yet risen to triple expansion on the Thames—but they are direct-acting, are fitted with surface condensers, and will develop some 3,500 indicated horse-power, which will send the superb vessel along at about the same speed as the Greyhounds of the Atlantic.

And large also she is for the Thames—310 feet long and 32 feet beam; twelve furnaces raise the steam in four boilers; electric bells ring in every quarter, and the electric light glows throughout. Her appearance on the Thames markedly indicates the great improvement now proceeding in the river boats. For if the down-traffic has its *Koh-i-noor*, and the up-river its *Cardinal Wolsey*, the ordinary penny steamers can boast their *Bismarck* and their *Empress Frederick*.

It is the proud assertion of the Association that it can carry no fewer than 250,000 persons in one day. The long-distance boats are chiefly for excursions; but the others are for business as well as pleasure. And this fleet also—the penny steamers—is being gradually renewed. Pretty little vessels of from about 40 to 100 tons register are gliding swiftly and swan-like over the great river, and adding immensely to London's means of locomotion. They steam from London to Battersea in about three-quarters of an hour, including stopping at near a score of piers, putting down and taking up passengers. Look at the *Bismarck*, for instance, or the *Kaiser*, or the *Shah*, built by Samuda on Thames Bank. With their white sides gleaming over the dark water, their many-windowed cabins, their spacious decks and comfortable seats, their commodious accommodation below, their almost smokeless funnels, and their swift and steady motion, they now offer some of the pleasantest travelling in London, and do much to roll away the reproach of poor steamers plying on the classic Thames.

But if the penny boats are built on the river, the *Koh-i-noor* comes from that crack centre of British ship-building — the Clyde. And from Glasgow came the first steam-vessel that ever plied on the Thames. She came in that epoch - making year of Water-loo — 1815 — and she was brought by a Mr. George Dodd, who, however, seems only to have found poverty for his pains.

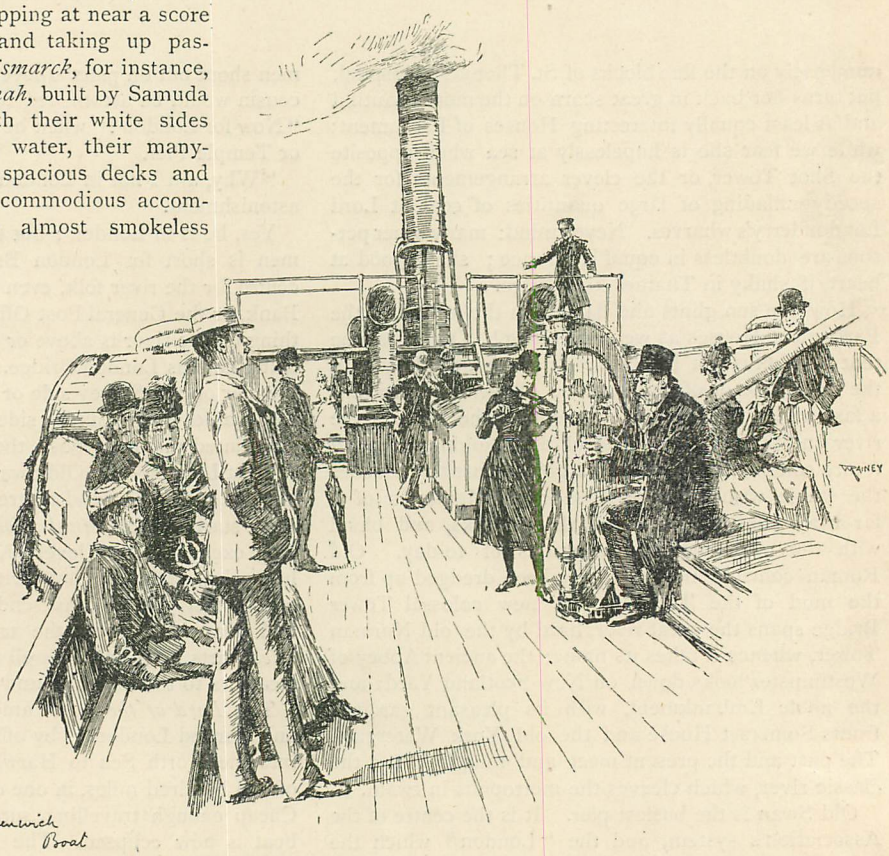
She was a small boat of about 75 tons and fourteen or sixteen horse-power, but he brought her round from Glasgow by sails and steam, experiencing some rough weather in the Irish Sea, and her nine-feet paddle-wheels began to churn up the waters of Father Thames.

But Dodd's laurels are disputed. Some folks say that a Mr. Lawrence, who had put a steamer on the Severn, brought her up to the Thames by canal—could such a thing be done now?—but was obliged to desist from his purpose by reason of the watermen's opposition. Then a man named Dawson established a steamer in 1813 to cover the twenty miles or so between Gravesend and London, and that was the first plying for public accommodation.

So there are three persons contending for the laurel crown, and we cannot tell on whose hard British head to place it. The unfortunate Dodd, however, if not the first, was undoubtedly very prominent in putting steamers on the Thames.

With what wonder we can imagine gaping cockneys would watch the smoke-vomiting, paddle-beating creatures go by; and no doubt some croakers vehemently asserted that the nasty things would burst up directly!

There always are folks who think things will burst



The Greenwich Boat

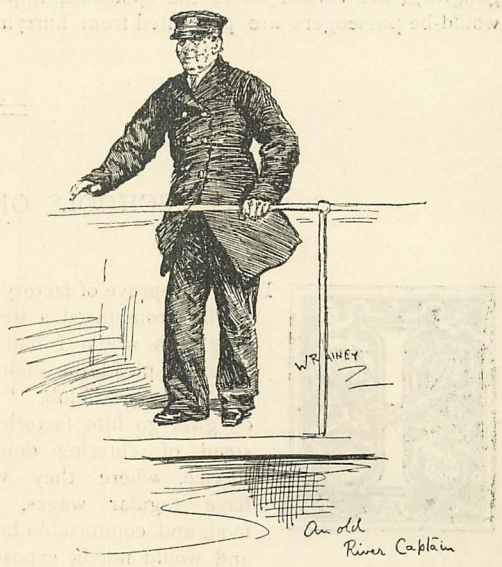
up. Occasionally they do, if only to keep the woeful prophets in countenance. And so it happened here. In July, 1817, one of the early steamers on the Thames—the *Regent* (how that name takes us back to the days of the Regency) was accidentally burnt, off Whitstable. But that did not stop the onward march of the movement. About this time there were two—the *Richmond* and the *London*—plying between London and Twickenham, and they are reported to have carried 10,000 passengers in four months. Then there was the *Sons of Commerce*, designed by Dodd to run down the Pool to Gravesend. She—if *Sons of Commerce* can be "she"—actually ran from London to Margate in eleven hours, thirty-five minutes, and made a speed of about ten miles an hour. In 1866 there was the *Majestic* plying between London and Margate, and possibly disturbing the minds of the owners of the old Margate hoys; for the Kentish watering-place seems to have been beloved of Londoners even then. The *Majestic*, too, had been seen puffing along towing vessels of 700 tons behind it.

The ingenious Dodd actually contrived an apparatus for lowering the chimneys when passing under the bridges. Was it the telescopic invention, or the delightfully ingenious system even now in use on some boats, of simply turning down the funnel by a hinge, and impartially distributing the heated air and any smoke and blacks that may be flying about on the crowd of passengers? Carbon, they say, is good for indigestion, but we doubt if this is an efficient method of applying the charm.

The appearance of these new-fangled concerns called steamers alarmed the old Thames watermen. They deemed the puffing paddled-wheeled monsters an invasion of their sacred rights. Forthwith they opposed the boats. Trades-unions and trade opposition existed even then, you see. Their opposition was great, but ineffectual. Who can stand against steam? Electricity, perhaps; but even that great giant cannot yet dispense with its assistance. And so at length the watermen made peace with the enemy; but they have their revenge. Only Thames watermen can be employed on Thames steamers; the men adapted themselves to circumstances, and the paddle-boats which diminished their old trade have given them new employment.

But their numbers are sadly reduced. Time was when there were 40,000 members on the Watermen's Roll. The Thames then was the great highway, and the watermen—*i.e.*, the men who rowed boats on the river to convey passengers—used to ply up and down and ferry across, and were a very important body of men. They date from 1556, and still form an incorporated Company of the City of London. But first coaches came, and then bridges, and steamboats, and metropolitan railways, and the Watermen's Company sadly dwindled. Yet they hold a monopoly still, and except for certain ferries, no person can ply for hire in a boat on the Thames but a member of the Watermen's Company, between Staines and Yantlet Creek.

John Taylor, the water-poet, bitterly complained of the coaches. "I do not inveigh," he wrote, "against any coaches that belong to persons of worth or quality, but only against the caterpillar swarm of hirelings. They have undone my poor trade whereof I am a member." What would he say to the "caterpillar swarm of hirelings" to-day, and the usefulness thereof?



He would find other changes also. The Thames Conservancy Board now rules the river, controls its bed, its shores, and its navigation from Cricklade, in Wiltshire, to the aforesaid Creek of Yantlet. Before 1857, when the first Act constituting the Board was passed, the all-powerful Corporation of the City ruled the Thames from Staines downwards. Some of the piers belong to the Conservancy Board, some to the Steamboat Association. They are pretty frequent in certain parts of the river—the boats taking only about two minutes to travel between them. But so expeditiously are the boats stopped, the gangways run aboard, and the passengers transferred, that the halt occupies but about a minute, and then on again glides the little vessel full speed ahead with its living load. The whole operation is so deftly done by the piermen and the boatmen that it is little, if anything, more than the pulling-up of a 'bus, and with this comfort for humanitarians: that the frequent stoppages cause no severe trial to horse-flesh.

It is very quiet to-day down here on one of the piers. The wind is chilly; few people are travelling, forgetful of the snug cabins of the new boats; the tide is low, and we are beneath the level of the Embankment. The noise of London roars around, but somewhat softened; we seem to be outside it, and might be miles away from the hurry and bustle that we cannot see. A fat little sparrow hops and flits about the timber balks, as much at home as if in a country rick-yard; a labourer lurches down the incline from the Embankment, a tin can under his arm; an energetic shabby-genteel man—how many shabby-genteel folk there are in London!—fiercely paces from side to side, his face portraying

trouble; a worn-visaged woman sits on one of the benches; then another labourer lurches down; far out in mid-stream a little screw-tug hauls fast along a train of bulky barges. The water is lumpy to-day; but presently, up glide two boats, one from either side, swiftly and smoothly; officials start from their shelters, gangways are rattled on to the sponsons, impulsive would-be passengers are prevented from hurrying on board before those coming off have disembarked, a clergyman and his boys turn up from somewhere, the late passenger thunders down the incline, the impulsive labourers, disdaining the gangways, jump on the sponsons by the paddle-boxes, and before you can say the familiar Jack Robinson, the pretty little vessels, as docile to the captains' will as the best trained horse, are away to the next pier.

SCHOOLS OF DOMESTIC SERVICE.

"I DON'T approve of factory girls at all," pronounced a wealthy lady with whom I had ventured to plead the claims of a working girls' club. "Why do girls go into factories instead of entering domestic service, where they would have regular wages, good food, and comfortable homes, and would not be exposed to the temptations you describe? There should be no such thing as factory girls; I don't approve of them at all!" she reiterated.

I did not remind the irate lady that she owed to the work of these same factory girls a large proportion of the necessities and luxuries of life by which she was surrounded; nor did I endeavour to prove to her that great as is our need of domestic servants, we should find it difficult to employ in our homes a sudden influx of the hundreds of thousands of maidens who are working in our factories to-day. I felt strongly inclined to impress upon her that she would about as readily admit a gorilla into her elegant house as one of the rough lassies I was trying to benefit. But I refrained, and contented myself with laying before her one or two of the reasons and remedies, as I deemed them, of the increasing distaste which the girls of the working-class seem to manifest towards domestic service.

I said little of the disqualification on the *mistress* side of the problem, though I might have dilated on the slavery, the unkindness, the loneliness endured by servants, especially in lower middle-class families. It was useless to touch on these things: one cannot venture to suggest a direct panacea for them; they are conditions out of which we hope to grow with the development of the race. But I spoke of the hindrances to the girls themselves, which seemed to open vistas of surprise to my hearer; and thinking there may be others to whom my experiences may likewise be new, I am setting them down here.

As is well known, the children leave our Board schools at the age of twelve or thirteen years (sometimes even earlier). Girls cannot enter factories till they are fourteen, so that there is a danger that at a most important period in a child's career there may be a period of interregnum, or waste of a year, two, or even three years. Amongst the lower working-classes in London and the large towns it is usual for the wives as well as the husbands to go out to their daily toil, and when the parents are industrious or the need is pressing, work will at once be found for the little lass whose emancipation from the Board school has been anticipated as a new means of supply to the wages fund; the work she will do will be one of the innumerable home industries by the aid of which the poor manage to eke out a subsistence: tailoring, match-box making, boot-stitching, or whale-bone covering, perhaps. Or maybe a "place" will be found for her, and she will have her first taste of domestic service. Too often, however, she will be left at home: ostensibly to mind a baby very likely, really to run wild on the streets. There will be no one to initiate her into the decent housewifely ways which might make a true *home* of the bare tenement, and be a source of untold comfort to the toiling members of the family. She will be loitering and romping with rough companions, forgetting all she has learned at school, the very discipline of school proving a stimulus to evil by the rebound of license consequent upon the withdrawal of its restraint. All this just at a time when the child's education should commence. As has been said, during school-time she has been only "carting materials," and now, instead of beginning to build, she squanders what she has gathered. By the time she is fourteen she is confirmed in her wild ways, and only fit for work at a factory; no decent home would be open to her, neither would she submit to its discipline.

I have said that the little lass sometimes takes a "place" at twelve or thirteen years of age. It may be easily imagined what sort of "place" this would be. No one with a very comfortable home or easy ideas of housekeeping would hire a *child* to do the work, so that the places most frequently open to such children in the poor districts are the small general shops, beer-shops, and the homes of women-sweaters. The women in these establishments want a little drudge to help in the shop, run errands, mind the baby, do the washing,

and "tidy up." Very often they are little less than tyrants at home. They have hard lives; drunken husbands, perhaps; they are beaten and baffled in their struggle with the world, and their little advancement they have won at the cost of a tenacious resistance; the only power they can wield is that over their children and the little alien who comes for a paltry eighteenpence or two shillings a week. Without teaching or experience, with little brain power and no physique, the child servant is expected to do the work of a woman. Doubtless she is often very stupid, and her mistress, to whose own share no discipline has come but that of hard words and blows, knows no other method of instructing her poor apprentice. In such a home as this there is no thrift; times vary, food is sometimes scant, and then, of course, it is the little hireling who goes short; the mother has *some* feeling for her own offspring. The paltry wages fall into arrear, if, as I have known, they are not *kept back*, so that a good girl shall be unable to leave for fear of forfeiting what is due to her. Of a truth, things are not always as bad as this, but I have known such cases, where the child-servant has toiled on under these conditions, leaving for her work at six in the morning, not returning till nine at night, her wages weeks in arrear. For her there is no Factory Act, there are no Factory Inspectors, the Labour Commission takes no cognisance of her case. Is it any wonder that she rushes to the factory the day she is fourteen, disgusted with domestic service, and resists one's pleadings to take another place with: "You see, miss, I must have my evenin's and Sundays," though the evenings may not begin till eight o'clock, and Sundays must be spent in cleaning up at home?

As conditions at present exist, and there is so much poverty, thriftlessness, and shiftlessness amongst the lower classes, what can be suggested as a remedy? Firstly, the little girls at school should be taught something of the American Kitchen Garden system. We are careful in our better-class homes to foster the housewifely sense in our little maidens from the beginning. They have their dolls to nurse and dress, their dolls' houses to tidy and clean, their dolls' dinner and tea-things to wash up, their toy cooking-stoves to play with. But more often than not the children of the poor have none of these things. It was a revelation to me when I saw for the first time a doll given to a child who had never had one before. I shall never forget the clutch with which she seized it, and the hug of speechless rapture with which she folded it in her arms. It is difficult to insert anything into the already crowded curriculum of our Board schools, but if ladies would experiment by taking classes for an hour on a Saturday or in an evening, to teach the children, with the aid of large toys and bright songs, sweeping, dusting, ironing, washing a baby, the directors of our national education might be readily won by the success of the scheme, as they have been by that of the Children's Happy Evenings.

But though little girls might learn much in this way, more is required, and we need free Schools of Domestic Science, to which the girls should be passed, on finishing their standards in the elementary schools. We fully appreciate the good work which some of the School boards are achieving in their cookery schools, but housemaids' work and laundry work should be included. The pupils should attend such schools every day; and if attendance were not compulsory, it would probably at first have to be encouraged by means of certificates and rewards. After six months the most proficient girls might be hired out to work in the neighbourhood by the day or half-day, only a small (if any) percentage of their earnings being retained by the school. Subsequently, for those who choose to go on further, classes for dressmaking, hairdressing, French, waiting at table, home-nursing, and the duties of upper servants might be added, and the funds of the school be materially increased by the fees of ladies using it as a registry-office for trained servants.

I have laid stress on the condition that the attendance of children should be *daily* because I have found that one of the many terrors that besets even a big girl in going away to service is that of sleeping in a room or a *bed* by herself. In our large towns the poor live so much huddled together, four or five in a room, that the thought of the cold, loneliness, darkness, of going to bed alone, has been more than some of them could face. After a while, it would be best for the girl to enter the School of Domestic Science altogether, to accustom her to absence from home, but at first a good deal of liberty should be given her, and its withdrawal be a matter of degrees.

Moral lessons should certainly not be neglected, but the training and discipline would go far to supply what has often been entirely lacking in the servants we take almost recklessly into our homes.

The expense of such an undertaking may be considered insuperable, but it need not be very great at first. If it were necessarily enormous, when we consider the amount of comfort or annoyance which servants are capable of bringing us, and the dangers which beset our young girls in factories, we should be prepared to make a sacrifice. It is possible that our Colleges of Domestic Science might prove so attractive that young mistresses might be induced to take courses of instruction also, which would not only increase the funds of the undertaking, but serve the cause of domestic service by enlarging the knowledge, sympathy, and consideration of the mistress.

D. K. LEES.

HOW A WILDERNESS BECAME A GARDEN.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

THE STOCKING OF A SUBURBAN GARDEN.

WE hinted last month that a pleasant and a friendly rivalry was rapidly springing up between two of the neighbouring occupants of Highland Villas: John Smith and his better half, Alice, and Charles Robinson with his enterprising niece, Mary.

And now that the Michaelmas month had well set in, the opportunities for horticultural rivalry were the more ready to hand, inasmuch as active preparations were now being made for the stocking of the two gardens, and the following little conversation took place one morning "over the garden wall."

"Pretty busy, I see you are, Mr. Smith, this morning," said Charles Robinson. "I suppose before long we shall be looking at your orchid-house, with its tropical growth inside, and that next year you will be sending me in some fine Muscats from your vinery?"

"No, Master Charles," replied John Smith, with a twinkle of mirth in his eye: "I shall look to *you* for luxuries of that sort; but we don't mind your small chaff, do we, Alice?" he continued, turning to his wife, whose good-humoured smile spoke for itself.

"No," added Charles, with more of a serious business air about him; "I suppose hardy perennials, shrubs, bulbs, and, of course, an admixture of annuals, will occupy us chiefly, for although I enjoy, as I know *you* do, looking over the well-kept and princely domain of one of the 'upper ten,' yet we are too near some smoke to attempt rarities, even if our gardens were large enough for them."

As, then, from about Michaelmas to Christmas, or, indeed, so long as there is no frost about, is the best time for garden changes in the shape of shrub planting, we cannot do better than now record what took place in the gardens of our two friends this autumn. They wisely chose good open weather, as when the soil is heavy and spongy with rain the difficulties to be encountered are greater, and work is often untidy. Now, we must remember that our new gardens at Highland Villas have already been well trenched. This, then, is the first essential before planting; and the next thing, perhaps, to name is the condition of the *roots* of the shrubs, that we are now supposed to purchase from some nursery. Good fibrous roots, that spread all round, are the most desirable, and when, as in the case we are supposing, we may be making a considerable purchase of shrubs with which to stock our two gardens, a nurseryman would not object to our having several shrubs taken up at once, so as to enable us to examine the roots. Choose, then, rather a shrub of three feet high, with roots well-formed and spread out, in preference to one of double the height with scanty and inferior roots, so that you must not be deceived by the *appearance* of your shrub. Another important thing to notice in passing is that when, through any mishap, any of the roots have been broken, bruised, or cut, have all such ragged ends clean cut away with a sharp knife, and also where the roots have of necessity been curtailed, a proportionate quantity of the head of the shrub itself should also be cut in, so as by this means to make up for the loss of the roots that nourish the whole.

And next, do not plant your shrubs *too deep*. This is a fatal mistake; the hole, then, for the reception of your new shrub should be of such a depth as to have the collar of the shrub just where it originally stood in its own soil. Indeed, no harm will be done if your plant stands a little higher out of the ground than it formerly did. At the bottom of the hole have a little rather finely-sifted mould or good friable soil, and then hold your shrub carefully as you place it in, and spread the roots out uniformly all round. As you throw in more mould, gently sway the head of the plant backwards and forwards, so as to allow the soil to work its way well among the roots. If it happen that the soil is obstinate and does not work in as you could wish it, push it in with a bean stick or the handle of any garden tool. When the mould is half filled in you might very *gently* tread it in, and when all is in you may tread again a little more boldly, making the whole finally on a level. Should your shrub be a tall one, it would be well to support it in its new position as in the accompanying little sketch. Three good sticks placed against it will keep it from swaying about in the wind. Some water should be given, but you need not be alarmed if you notice that your shrub looks a little disposed to droop at first. All things when just transplanted flag slightly before the roots begin to strike well into their new home.

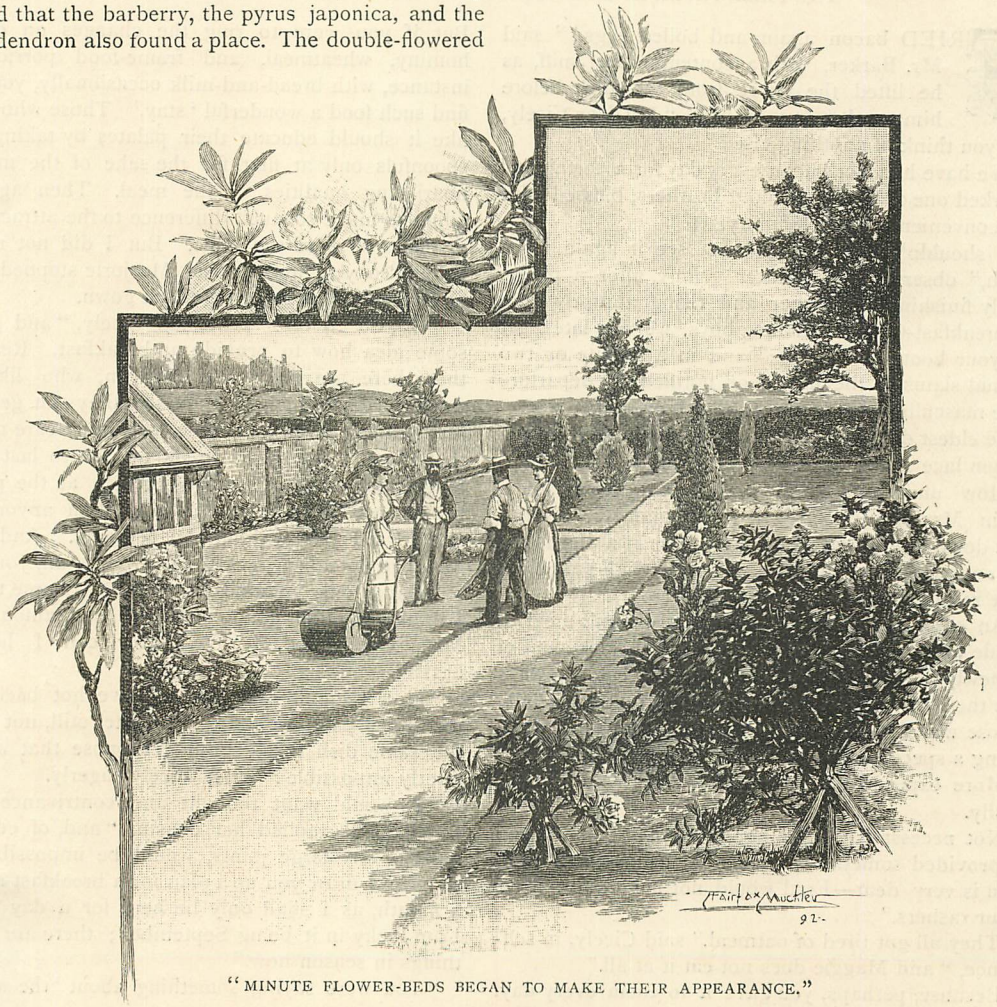
We have thought it well to be thus particular on the subject of shrub trans-

planting, for the same care and caution is necessary in the re-planting of all shrubs, so that our remarks bear generally on the question of stocking our garden.

It only remains, then, for us to name a few old popular favourites suitable for suburban gardens. Varieties of the holly naturally suggest themselves first. Choose some green, or some variegated with red and with yellow berries. Our old friend the mountain ash is a coarse grower and of tall habit. The flower of it is poor, but the brilliant red berries remain on for months and have a very good effect, while the foliage, too, is handsome. And against the front wall of the house, both John Smith and Charles Robinson resolved to plant a magnolia, and each watched afterwards with jealous eye to see which plant grew the best. The *Magnolia grandiflora* is admirably adapted for a wall. It is a rapid grower, and the leaves resemble those of a magnified laurel, while the fragrance of the bloom towards the end of the summer is most pleasant. Until properly established, however, it does not flower. The protection of the wall is a great advantage, as the magnolia cannot be called hardy. Another variety of the magnolia is the *M. conspicua*, which flowers in the early spring. In the gardens of our two friends, of course, it need hardly be said that the barberry, the pyrus japonica, and the rhododendron also found a place. The double-flowered cherry and a Guelder rose were also put among other things in the front of the house. These two old-fashioned favourites may often be seen in that position and the snowball blooms of the Guelder rose are conspicuous on the wayside of many of our old English roads. Nor must we from the few examples that we are able to give omit the laurustinus. Its real charm, perhaps, is that it is nearly always in flower. Indeed, we must have observed that often the flowers of a new season begin to make their appearance before those of the preceding one have entirely faded from our view.

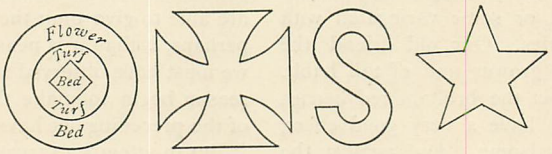
But to attempt to treat of the *entire* stocking of a new garden in a single paper is, of course, an impossibility. The shrubs and evergreens naturally come first, and more especially at the time of the year which we are now approaching. Nothing should be moved from one garden to another, say, during a hot August, and when the sap is up.

Some turf had been laid down, a little in the front, and some also nearly under the windows at the back of both houses. Some minute flower-beds began, too, to make their appearance upon them, and it was curious to study the variety of shape on each lawn, though no



"MINUTE FLOWER-BEDS BEGAN TO MAKE THEIR APPEARANCE."

bad taste was displayed in either case. Here, for example, are one or two specimens of the designs of our two gardening rivals. And it was amusing to find that if Charles Robinson had a bed, say in the shape of a star-fish, John Smith and his wife would the next morning design a heptagonal bed or a simpler hexagon. A bed in the shape of a Maltese cross is always an effective one, as also is a circular one, with the *inner* circle of turf and a small star of a bed in the centre of all. Then, again, a very effective bed is one in the shape of a large capital S. But it will easily be seen that designs of this nature can readily be varied in accordance with the size of the garden or the taste of the gardener.



SHAPES OF FLOWER-BEDS.

In October we may have to speak of the bulbs that were put in, and of the choice that was made. As, however, our friends took possession of their new quarters at Midsummer, they found time to get in at once at that time some autumn blooming flowers, so that in this present month of September they had a fair dahlia display both of single and double ones. Dahlias require plenty of water, and, when the bloom is heavy, plenty of support with strong stakes; but their great enemy is the earwig, which so often disfigures the bloom. The earwig should be destroyed early in the season. One killed then is worth numbers later on; so that even in this the old adage holds true: "A stitch in time saves nine."

A BREAKFAST MENU FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER.

THE PRIZE PAPER IN THE HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT COMPETITION.

"FRIED bacon again, and boiled eggs!" said Mr. Barker, with a contemptuous sniff, as he lifted the cover from the dish before him one bright morning. "My dear Cicely, can't you think of anything else?"

"We have had hot bacon every day for a fortnight," remarked one of Cicely's candid brothers, blessed with an inconveniently good memory.

"I shouldn't care if I did not see it again for a month," observed Mr. Barker grimly, after a pause, rapidly finishing his rasher and rising abruptly from the breakfast-table. "Come, boys, we are late; get into your boots and be off;" and in a minute or two the loud slams of the hall door notified the departure of the masculine part of the Barker household.

The eldest daughter and housekeeper turned with a crimson face to the quiet little lady beside her.

"How unreasonable men are! now aren't they, Cousin Marjorie?" she cried indignantly. "They come down late, gobble their breakfasts at a disgusting rate, and yet expect as much variety at half-past eight in the morning as at dinner-time."

"An early breakfast is certainly a difficult meal to provide for," replied Miss Greenwood, "on account of the newly-lighted fire and cold oven; but I always think the first meal of the day so important, especially to those who are at work all day, that it is worth while making a special effort to render it appetising."

"More expense, that means," put in Miss Barker, ruefully.

"Not necessarily," said her cousin. "Now, if you had provided something beside that bacon—and good bacon is very dear—Fred would not have eaten three or four rashers."

"They all got tired of oatmeal," said Cicely, in self-defence, "and Maggie does not eat it at all."

"Because, perhaps, you gave it to them every day. But if you were to ring the changes on oatmeal, hominy, wheatmeal, and frame-food porridge, for instance, with bread-and-milk occasionally, you would find such food a wonderful 'stay.' Those who did not like it should educate their palates by taking a few spoonfuls only at first, for the sake of the milk and nourishing qualities of the meal. Then again the adjuncts make so much difference to the attractiveness or the reverse of the table. But I did not mean to lecture so yet," and Cousin Marjorie stopped, with a pitying glance at the girl's black gown.

"Oh, do go on!" protested Cicely, "and give me some idea how to provide at breakfast. Remember that there are papa and Duncan, who like nice, savoury things, such as they say they can get at the restaurants; Fred and Alice, who don't care much so that there is plenty, as breakfast has to last them a long time; Maggie," with a glance at the pale girl beside her, "who is more dainty than anyone else; and myself—six without the servants. And I have only five pounds a week to keep house on, you know."

"But as only you and Maggie are at home to lunch, I think you ought to do well with that amount," said Miss Greenwood. "Well, how can I help you best?"

"How I should like not to have hot bacon for a month, as papa wished! Or, better still, not to have the same dish twice. But I suppose that would be utterly impossible?" cried Cicely eagerly.

"It would want thought and contrivance for the small ones," replied her cousin, "and, of course, as regards any large joints, would be impossible. But suppose I draw you up a plan for a breakfast menu for a month, as I shall only be here for a day or two? I am lucky in it being September; there are so many things in season now."

"You were saying something about 'the adjuncts.'

What did you mean?" queried Cicely, with a warm word of thanks.

"Bread, for instance. Do you know how tired some people get of bread from the same baker's day after day? The fancy and patent kinds which abound nowadays will always be relished for a change. Then preserves will please Fred and Alice, and throughout the summer you might try and have a dish of fruit. It is deliciously wholesome, and sets off the table as well. You stick to tea and coffee, I see. Do you never have cocoa?"

"I have been ordered it, but it is so rich and thick I can't take it," said Maggie the fastidious.

"The best is that from which the starch has been extracted. I like Schweitzer's or Van Houten's," said Miss Greenwood. "A good way of making it is to take one heaped teaspoonful to every person, and mix the cocoa with half a breakfastcup of water and the same of milk. This makes it more of a beverage and less of a food. Then I invariably disregard the directions, and boil the whole together for at least five minutes. I find this brings out the flavour, and removes the occasional grittiness of unboiled cocoa. Now for the actual dishes and recipes. I will put down one hot dish and one cold one for each day—the cold one generally a *pièce de résistance*. You can do as you please about the various porridges, though I strongly advise them, and I will add the etceteras if you like."

First Week.

1.—Pork pie (Melton Mowbray), poached eggs on anchovy toast, baked apples, malt bread.

2.—Devilled kidneys, sardines, hot rolls, marmalade.

3.—Small tinned tongue, stuffed tomatoes, scones, mustard and cress.

4.—Scallops, cold tongue, hot buttered toast, jam.

5.—Fried mushrooms, cold tongue, dry toast, pears.

6.—Plain omelette, cold tongue, Vienna bread.

7.—Smoked haddock, potted remains of tongue, brown bread.

Recipes.

Poached eggs on anchovy toast.—Make some rather thick squares of toast, butter well on both sides, and then pour over the pieces as much anchovy sauce as they will absorb. Poach the eggs lightly in boiling water with a few drops of vinegar in it, drain, trim the edges, and place upon the toast. Serve very hot.

Devilled kidneys.—Take three sheeps' or pigs' kidneys, split them open, pepper and salt them, adding a little cayenne. Grill over a clear fire, moistening with butter while cooking. They must not be overcooked, and when done should be red and juicy inside. Mix one ounce of butter (oiled) with a dessertspoonful of made mustard; add cayenne and black pepper to taste. Pour this "devil" sauce over the kidneys, and serve very hot.

Stuffed tomatoes.—Take six large tomatoes, and scrape out part of the inside. Rub this through a sieve, and mix with any minced remains of ham, one ounce of bread-crumbs, one ounce of butter, and seasoning to taste. Fill the tomatoes with this mixture, and bake from ten to fifteen minutes in a moderate oven.

Scallops is a good way of using up cold fish. Remove the bones, shred the fish small, and if any sauce is left, mix it with the fish. Put it into some scallop shells, cover the top with bread-crumbs and a few little bits of butter; season to taste and make hot in the oven.

Mem.:—If variety be an object, the housekeeper must not order in *large* joints of ham, pickled pork, etc. Eggs in September are scarce and dear, and lavish use cannot be made of them. Three or four will make an omelette of fair size, large enough for inexperienced hands to attempt.

Second Week.

1.—Rice rissoles, pigeon pie, fancy bread (twists, etc.), plums.

2.—Pigeon pie, curried eggs, hot rolls, tomatoes.

3.—Pickled herrings, fried sausages, dry toast, jam.

4.—Grilled bones, small piece of pickled pork, brown bread.

5.—Mutton cutlets, cold pork, hot toast, cress.

6.—Fish cakes, cold pork, milk bread, marmalade.

7.—Croustades, chicken and ham sausage (cold), hot scones, greengages.

Recipes.

Rice rissoles.—Boil one teacup of rice tender in water, beat smooth, with one ounce of butter, two tablespoonfuls of tongue (remains), finely chopped, seasoning of pepper and herbs if liked, and one egg. Make into balls, flour them, and fry brown. If rissoles are served for breakfast, it is best to make them the day before, as they are easier to fry when cold and firm.

Pigeon pie.—Two pigeons and one pound of steak make a nice pie. Divide the birds, and hide the steak about the pieces—some pigeon pies are more like steak pies. Remember to put the claws through the hole in the crust. Season highly with pepper, and a little chopped parsley and onion would be approved by many.

Curried eggs.—Boil four eggs hard, and cut in halves; stand the halves in a dish, and pour curry sauce round them. Serve very hot.

Curry sauce.—Fry three onions and one sour apple in a little butter, put them into half a pint of stock, and when soft rub through a sieve. Add one dessertspoonful of curry-powder (or more if liked) and a bayleaf, which last must, of course, be removed before serving.

Pickled herrings.—Remove the heads and the backbones of six or eight fresh herrings; bake till tender in a pickle composed of equal quantities of vinegar and water, a teaspoonful of peppercorns, and three or four bay-leaves. When done, take out the fish and serve cold.

To grill bones the fire must be clear and fierce, or the bones will not be crisp. Pepper heavily, and salt to taste. Serve on hot buttered toast. Any poultry, game, and meat bones may be thus served.

Croustades.—Some thick pieces of crumb of bread, cut into rounds the size of a tumbler. Fry a light brown in clarified dripping. Hollow out the middle, and fill with stewed mushrooms or mince of any kind. To be served hot.

Third Week.

1.—Brawn, buttered eggs, malt bread, baked apples.

2.—Brawn, mushroom toast, hot rolls, jam.

3.—Brawn, meat patties, dry toast, plums.

4.—Kedgeree, tin of potted meat, hot toast, marmalade.

5.—Grilled steak, cold sausages, stewed pears.

6.—Croquettes of cold meat, kippers, hot buttered scones, cress.

7.—Stewed kidneys, scalloped eggs, brown bread.

Recipes.

Mushroom toast.—Stew gently one pint of mushrooms in two ounces of butter for about ten minutes, shaking them occasionally. Season with mace and a little cayenne. Then add one teaspoonful of flour and let it get brown, when add a teacupful of stock, a pinch of salt, and a squeeze of lemon-juice. Have ready some squares of buttered toast, and pour the mushrooms over it, letting the gravy soak well into it.

Kedgeree.—This is an Indian breakfast dish. Boil four ounces of rice as for a curry, add two ounces of butter and any remains of cold fish, shred finely, and free from skin. Season with cayenne and salt to taste. Stir all together over the fire until very hot, then add two eggs, and stir until well mixed. Let it get very hot, but not boil.

Fourth Week.

1.—Corned beef, potato balls, hot rolls, marmalade.

2.—Corned beef, œufs au plât, hot rolls, greengages.

3.—Corned beef, anchovies on toast, milk bread, cress.

4.—The pope's patties, potted beef, scones, baked apples.

5.—Pigs' feet soused, mutton collops, brown bread, jam.

6.—Pigs' feet, omelette with herbs, dry toast, pears.

7.—Bloaters, meat cake, hot rolls.

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1.—Twice laid, sausage rolls, plums, milk rolls.

2.—Scotch woodcock, liver and bacon, hot toast.

Recipes.

Soused pigs' feet.—Scald and scrape clean three or four feet, wash and let them boil gently, skimming carefully, until the flesh is soft and the bones loose. When done lay them in a mixture of half vinegar and half liquor in which they were boiled, seasoned with one dozen peppercorns, a few cloves, and a little mace or allspice. Put into a jar and keep covered till wanted. Serve cold, split from top to bottom.

Twice laid.—Any remains of cold fish, shred small. Beat up with a good-sized piece of butter, a spoonful—large or small according to the quantity of fish—of anchovy sauce, and half the amount of cooked potato that there is of fish. Season with pepper, cayenne, and a little salt, put into a mould, and make hot in oven. When hot, turn out, and garnish with hard-boiled eggs.

Meat cake.—This is really made of veal, but is nice with any kind of cooked meat. Mince the meat, and add to every pound of lean a quarter of a pound of fat or suet, minced fine, salt and pepper to taste, and the grated rind and juice of half a lemon. Mix all well together, put it into a buttered cake-tin, lined with fine bread-crumbs. Cover with bread-crumbs, and bake in a very moderate oven until brown on the top. Turn out and serve hot. A fierce oven will dry it up.

The pope's patties.—This is a vegetarian dish. Line six mince-pie tins with pastry, and fill them with the following mixture: six hard-boiled eggs minced, and a dozen large mushrooms; season with salt and pepper, and spice (nutmeg and mace) if liked. Mix all together, and moisten with one tablespoonful of oiled butter. Cover the pies, and bake them for about a quarter of an hour.

"Thanks awfully," was Cicely's comment, a few hours later, on the list Miss Greenwood had drawn up.

"Did you make all those up out of your own head?" asked Maggie.

"I'm afraid I can't quite claim that," laughed their cousin. "One or two of the recipes are adapted from that capital little book, 'Choice Dishes at Small Cost,'* and I am indebted to Mrs. de Salis for more than one idea. But it is generally my experience that the majority of cookery books—above all, of old-fashioned ones—are too expensive for every-day people. But have I given you all the recipes you want, Cicely? I may have insulted you with too many, but I really was not certain of the capabilities of your cook."

"You have forgotten the scalloped eggs—I never heard of them," said Cicely.

"Oh, that is only one of the thousand and one methods of dressing eggs. But as I am not sure whether you will find the recipe in any book, I had better give it to you. You want a cupful of fine bread-crumbs, seasoned with a pinch of salt and a dash of pepper. Line a small buttered tin with the crumbs. Boil three eggs hard, cut them into slices, dip them in some thick gravy, left from previous day, or in anchovy sauce. Place a layer of eggs on the bread-crumbs, then one of crumbs, repeating until the mould is full. Bake a light brown, and serve with gravy."

"I see you have several times suggested fancy bread and milk bread. Could we make it and the hot rolls at home, do you think?" questioned Cicely.

"You could *make* them, I dare say," replied her cousin, "but it is the baking which is the difficulty. Bread ought to have a brick oven, you know, and it is very seldom light if baked in an ordinary one like yours. Little 'breads,' raised with baking-powder, you might manage, but you could not get your oven hot enough to bake them fresh for breakfast."

"The corned beef, the brawn, and the tongue are all tinned meats," was the next criticism.

"They are safe enough if you get a good brand," said Miss Greenwood. "An ox-tongue served *au naturel* is very extravagant, you know. The root and the fat are nearly always left, whereas if rolled all 'goes down' together. Of course, to my mind, there is nothing as a sideboard dish to equal a large boiled ham, but that again is a very expensive joint. I can give you a recipe for making brawn, if you like, but it is a good deal of trouble, and is best suited for a number, as it is not worth while making a small quantity. To make it, take a pig's head, already pickled, and boil it slowly for six hours, when let it get cold and take out the bones. Boil also two pigs' tongues, two ears, and two trotters until tender, and remove the bones. Cut the meat small, and season with pepper, salt, and sage. Add three sausages (pork), fried and sliced, and the liquor from the bones, boiled to a strong jelly, and seasoned with pepper and salt. Put all together into a mould and press it down firmly. Leave it with a weight on it for a day or two before using."

"Now I am going to make an ungracious remark," observed Cicely. "Some of these dishes seem to me just as suitable for luncheon and dinner as for breakfast."

"Well, my dear, and why not?" asked Cousin Marjorie. "Is one animal really more suitable for breakfast than another? And though the pig is generally sacred to the first meal of the day, I don't know why it should be."

"And, after all, if you stick to one thing, you can't have a variety," added Maggie, sapiently.

The others laughed.

"Some families have odd tastes," observed Miss Greenwood. "I remember visiting people whose favourite dish for breakfast was fruit tart."

"I suppose it is really only a matter of habit," chimed in Cicely. "When we come back home after our summer trip abroad, we never care to eat bacon and eggs—do we, Maggie? We only long for the delicious hot rolls and French coffee again."

"And yet only an hour or two later than your ordinary breakfast hour, if you were on the Continent, you would be revelling in the half-dozen courses of a *déjeuner à la fourchette.*"

"Well, what is the moral of it, then?" asked Cicely. "That anything is fit for breakfast which is quickly prepared, and does not require long baking, a hot oven, or indeed long cooking of any sort?"

"Certainly; anything, that is, which your taste prefers. Perhaps, after a month of variety, your father may sigh for bacon and boiled eggs again. And even if he should still pine for more change, you can invent an infinite variety from those which I have given you."

BESSIE E. DUFFETT.

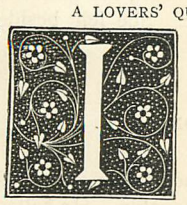
* Published by Cassell.

THE DEVOTION OF MARY SIMMONS: A RAILWAY ROMANCE.

BY HENRY FRITH.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

A LOVERS' QUARREL AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.



"I SUPPOSE ye won't mind the trains, sir; they do rush by here, for sure; but you'll soon become accustomed to them."

Thus remarked "old Bob Wrightson," as he was generally called. I had taken two rooms in his large and comfortable cottage for a period. The trains were no drawback to the situation. I was sketching out of doors most of the day, and after ten o'clock in the evening traffic was nearly suspended. So I replied—

"No, the trains will not annoy me. I am fond of the railroad, and I dare say you and I will have some chats about it."

My arrangements were quickly made, and in a few days I was installed in Wrightson's cottage—a charming retreat in our picturesque home county, Surrey. From the old bridge one could see an expanse of orchard and arable land, topped by a wood. Close by was the farmyard, with its red outbuildings, beyond which the stream opened into a lagoon; and then, contracting again, ran with increasing speed past the mill, darting rapidly by to escape the heavy wheel; then plunging down a shoot, it found space to eddy and to take breath in the shelter of the bank before it resumed its journey to the Thames.

"A fine farm," I remarked one evening to my host, who came in, as usual, after dinner to inquire how I had "been-a-doing."

"Ay, ay; it's in Elderdon's hands now; but it were Simmons' farm in my memory. A 'big pot' were Simmons in his way, sir; and I mind the time when his daughter and Silas Profitt was keepin' comp'ny. There was a rare stir about her."

"What did she do, Wrightson?"

"Well, sir, it's a story, what some gents calls a 'Romans'—a love-tale, you understand. Silas was an ingin-driver on this very line when I were a porter, afore I got maimed and halt, as you see. Tell ye the story with pleasure if I may smoke a bit."

Sitting by the open casement, we smoked that August evening, and Wrightson told the tale.

"Arthur Simmons had a daughter Mary, sir; and you must know that she was haughty-proud as a duchess, and as beautiful, good, and as fine a girl as ever walked. Ye could see her walkin' queen-like over the fields, with a scorny look in her dark eyes, and a toss of her head which spelt contempt. Ah! she were a real beauty in figure and in face; 'with Heaven's grace,' as my poor Jenny used to say.

"Several lads made up to Mary—her name was Mary, if I didn't mention it—but she played them like trout! Several asked her, and she refused them; but one man, Silas Profitt, the ingin-driver, whose people lived up near the Farm, he never asked her. Many a time he was up at the Farm on Sundays, and other times when he could get off his ingin (a goods' ingin), but he didn't speak, only watched and admired her.

"Old Simmons, you must know, was a secret kind o' man; there was somethin' mysterious in his mind and his ways. He made money in plenty—not always in farmin'; and when others would be complainin' of rain, and wantin' it when it didn't come; grumblin' at fine weather, and wishing for more sun next day, old Arthur never minded. He had money somehow; the only things he got cross about, or pretended to be cross over, were the railway robberies, which did happen pretty tidy often.

"He had a chap named Stone—Jack Stone—in his employment, and folk did say that *he* intended to marry Mary. Old Simmons, it was said, insisted on Stone proposin' to Mary, but she flouted him like the rest, so he took to a signal-box, and became a signalman for spite. Mind ye, a spiteful man in charge of signals isn't good; he's apt 'to take it out' of the trains, and delay them when he isn't in temper, and ingin-men don't like it.

"Silas Profitt didn't; and he reported detentions which Jack Stone had caused in sulks with Mary; but he hated Silas for it, particularly when he'd see Mary and him in the fields together, loiterin' and talkin', while he was just a Jack-in-the-Box in the cuttin'. Old Simmons used to scold her for talking to Silas so much, and bid her think of Jack; but Miss Mary tossed her head and laughed. She'd please herself.

"Things was this way, sir, when one evenin' Silas and Mary had a tiff—I have this from himself, so it's right—a regular quarrel all about nothing at all, as true lovers' quarrels is apt to be. They was true lovers, sure; but neither said it until that very evenin', when Silas, bein' promoted to special traffic on fast goods and the like, thought he'd speak.

"Will you believe me, sir, she laughed at him? She teased him, and half consented; then, whish! off she went like a bird for a space, and then quieted down again just out of reach like, waiting for him to say more; and to contradict him with her mouth while sayin' 'Yes' all the time with her eyes. Ah! some knows all about it. Girls is tidy skittish.

"Well, it ended in a tiff; and Silas says:

"'Look here, my lass, I'm in earnest. I am askin' ye, like a man, to marry me. Now, it's "Yes" or "No" with me, my girl. No shuntin' on and off here. I'm on the level, Mary, my dear, and I mean it. There's my hand.'

"'It's a pity it isn't a bit cleaner,' she says, pretending to turn up her nose, but laughin' in her eyes. 'Can't ye wash it, Silas, man?'

"'No,' he shouted, angry-like; 'it's a honest hand that never did a mean thing to man, woman, or child,

and you'll take me as I am or not at all. There now!'

"'I couldn't take you as you are—now, could I?' she says, lookin' roguish at him.

"But he didn't see her ways plain. He was plain and bluff and independent himself, and couldn't 'scriminate. So he turns about sharp and replies:

"'Then ye may whistle for Silas Profitt, my lady! Good-day t' ye, madam. I wouldn't ask ye to shake hands now. Good-bye!'

"'Whistle and I'll come to ye, my lad,' says she, smilin' at him; but he wouldn't take any notice; bein' so annoyed, he told me, that he didn't dare stay. So he went off in the gloamin', and didn't even look behind him at her standin' there, with tears in her eyes, all of a tremble.

"She stood there, sir, for some time, and you can imagine her feelin's! She didn't mean to send away Silas, but bein' too fond of what some calls 'coke-wettin'—a kind of off-and-on manner, I'm told, in French, though it sounds quite in the ingin-way in English—Mary lost her admirer. Her father wanted her to marry Jack the signalman, who did admire her greatly, but Mary couldn't take to him. She distrusted his ways.

"Still, bein' so haughty-proud, it wasn't in her to call Silas back. She had given him quite a hint a'ready as regards whistlin', and he didn't mind it. So after a while she turns home by the fields in the darkness, half-cryin' and half-angry, but just altogether disappointed.

"Many a time since I've heard her say that she never felt so miserable in her life as that evenin'. Poor girl, I can imagine it!

"She went along by the line home, and kept half hopin' that Silas would turn back, so she listened very intently—now and then stoppin' to hear him comin' along the railway, perhaps. She thought she heard somethin'—a sound of voices in low tones; and bein' curious, like most women, she thought she'd hear what was bein' said in the dark.

"So Mary stepped quietly on until she reached the signal-box, which was then lighted up; the lamps were shinin' out on the line through the darkness; but she crept in along the bank in the shade of the box; and, stoopin' down, discovered her own father and Jack Stone, talkin' very earnest at the foot of the ladder leadin' to the box. Jack had his back to the light, which fell strong on him, but her father's face was in the gleam, and Mary could peep round from the rain-channel by the metals behind the signal wires, close under the foundation of the box, unseen.

"She listened; and while she stood her hair nearly rose upon her head! Her father and Jack Stone were plotting to wreck a specie—special—train next night but one; and *Mary knew that Silas would drive that train!*

"All of a sudden, like a flash of lightning, there came into her mind the little accidents, the detentions, the milk and coal robberies, the lost goods for which no one could account. She remembered many things: many articles which she had seen at home, and wondered from where they had come. Her father a thief! Jack Stone a robber, and false to his employers! Was it all real?

"Yes! and now they were plottin' nothin' less than robbery of the gold. And the man to be killed—if any killin' occurred—was Silas Profitt, the man she loved! She could not hear more. She fell beside the line in a faintin' fit!"

———

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

MARY'S PLAN.

"WHEN at length poor Mary reached home, draggled and damp, her father scolded her terrible. He called her names, and was a-goin' to hit her in his rage, when she drew up, and cried out, 'If you hit me, father, you'll never see me again!'

"Simmons was fond of her, and he was frightened at the girl's firm ways, and a bit ashamed of himself, too. So he let his hand fall again, and asked her where she had been. She shuddered before him, and daren't say!

"'*I've* done no harm,' she replied, with a emphasis on the word. 'Don't ask me too much, please; I can't say. I'll tell you some day, never fear!'

Then she walked up into her room, leavin' her father in a dreadful rage. He didn't understand, and not knowin' what she might have heard, he was angrier with her, because uneasy himself. So he follows her upstairs, and says out loud—

"'Look you here, Molly: no more playin' with me! You've been gallivantin' with that Silas. Now listen. You'll marry Jack, or go out o' my house and tramp it! D'ye hear?'

"'Yes, father, I hear,' she replied, quiet as a mouse.

"'Then heed me! You'll just see Jack, and make it up. D'ye hear?'

"'Yes, father. When must I go?'

"'To-morrow,' he said, quite surprised.

"'Oh! father, not to-morrow—next day I'll see him, then——'

"'You'll see him to-morrow, or get out o' this house. That's flat!'

"'Very well,' she said. 'That's enough!'

"Now, sir, I'm an old man, and have seen somethin' of the other sex, and if Mary had given in like that to me, I'd a' suspected somethin" I would, for sure! Simmons ought to have guessed that a high-spirited lass like Molly wasn't goin' to give in all of a sudden! He should a' guessed she wanted time to play her own game. She was most dangerous when quiet. But Simmons was on'y married once, and hadn't my advantages. Ah! it were a fine 'nexperience' as I had, and all three on 'em deceased afore me, sir, and comfortable in the ground!

"Ye wonder I stood it! Well, so do I sometimes; but the company supported me in my work, and a porter can carry most things. But Simmons didn't suspect anythin'; he goes away fumin', but satisfied; and next day up comes Jack Stone when it was his turn off.

"'It's all right this time, Jack,' said old Simmons.

'So you'll be in luck. Molly will see ye, and it's your own fault if ye can't arrange the weddin'. She's a'most promised!'

"'Never!' exclaimed Jack, slappin' his knee in delight, as he always did, sir! 'Never!' he says. 'Why, it's a miracle!'

"'Miracle or parable, there it is! So ye'd best take back your words about peachin' on me, and makin' it warm for someone if she didn't consent. I can do no more; she'll obey me, any way: but you must treat her kind.'

"'Kind! Why, I'll be her slave, man! Where is she, Simmons? Give her a hail.'

"Mary Simmons came down, sir, like a ghost. She came in gently, as queen-like as ever, and shook hands with Jack, but dropped his fingers pretty quick. Still, he didn't mind that; and he chatted with her until her father rose up and went. Then Mary was for goin' too, but Jack prevented her.

"'Come, my lass, don't run away. I've somethin' to whisper to ye. I love ye, dear Molly, and want ye to marry me. Your father says you will consent to it—he wishes it; I wish it most of all. So, Mary, dearest, my best girl, say the word!'

"'What word, Mister Stone? Do you want me to say "I'll marry you" off-hand before I've seen you, and know you for what you are. I'd better wait!'

"'What d'ye mean?' he asked, getting uncomfortable. 'Won't ye marry me?'

"'Not yet. I can't yet,' she pleaded. 'How can I marry you now? You are so unreasonable, you men! Can't you wait a while?'

"'Of course I'll wait,' cried Jack, throwing his arm around her waist. She shivered under it, but loosed it quietly: so she told my poor Jenny, sir.

"Well, they talked, and Mary got paler and paler; and yet Jack was delighted. She listened to him, but was obliged to run out on pretended house-duties several times. At last he said—

"'I must go, Mary. I'm on duty soon: but to-morrow I'll come again, never fear.'

"'P'raps I'll come and see you,' she said, playful-like, lookin' at him in such a way that he grew red with pleasure.

"'Will ye? you *are* a darlin'!' he says. 'Come in the afternoon. I'll be at home then.'

"'Oh! I'll not be going to your cottage,' she says, with her eyes on the floor and her mouth curlin' up with contempt. 'But maybe I'd come in the evenin' to the box for a minute: just a minute, Mr. Stone, to please father!'

"'And me too,' he said. 'But ye mustn't stay in the box, Molly dear.'

"'And for what do you take me?' she says, with a toss of her head. 'Stay in your box?—I won't go at all, there!'

"'Oh! my darlin' girl, just a few minutes. I only meant because of the levers and the working—it's against the rules, ye know——'

"'Stolen fruit is the sweetest,' she said, with a curious look at him, which made the signalman feel once more uncomfortable. Did the girl mean anything beyond what she said?

"He put the idea away, and went off. When he had gone, Mary smiled to herself. She was a brave lass, as my poor Jenny could have told ye; and when Molly Simmons told my wife all this after, she smiled herself at the remembrance of it.

"So it came to pass that she half consented to see him next day, keepin' her own ideas in her head, and not forgetting Silas all the while. But how could she help the man she loved without sacrificing her father? And if she betrayed Stone, he would certainly revenge himself on her, and on her father too.

"So you see, sir, Mary was in what we calls a cleft stick. She couldn't turn either way without injuring herself, for if she had hinted her suspicions to her father he would beat her. Such a temper he was! Besides, that would hardly serve Silas Profitt.

"Again, as I've heard say, her pride wouldn't let her write to Silas; and when at last she thought of sending a message to him by the telegraph, she couldn't find out where he was. If she had gone up to headquarters and made inquiries, she could have fetched him, but she couldn't get so far without money; and her father kept her close, I can tell you. And again, he would surely see her going off!

"She was at her wits' end, sir, and it was a terrible situation, as you see. What did she do? I'll tell you. She set her woman's wits to work, and made up her mind to stop the signalman somehow. Her pride would be upset, and she might never save Silas after all! Even if she did, he would never know, and wouldn't come back to her! Then how she'd fall in his estimation: carrying on with Jack the signalman, he would think; and he would despise her, she thought. It was hard!

"Howsumever, she felt so fond of Silas, particularly now he had left her, that she made up her mind to put her pride in her pocket, and see Jack Stone; but not in the afternoon—in the evening. She came to me next day, and asked me about the trains. Now, Silas was to drive the special, and we all knew that it was due at a certain time by our instructions. These orders are issued daily when required; and we know—ingin-drivers *must* know—all the alterations, slewin' of rails, the bridge and line repairs, the shuntin' places, and every extra that is put on. But old Simmons could easily loose a rail and turn the 'goods' off the road; in the night it would not be noticed; or he could put a couple of sleepers on the line, and turn the ingin and waggons down the embankment!

"The job was well planned. Old Simmons had given out that he was going away for the evening. He had his horse saddled and his saddle-bags put on. The weather looked threatenin'—I remember the evenin' well, and have reason to. The clouds were heavy, and we thought thunder was about. Mary Simmons was put in the charge of the old housekeeper, but she came out to watch her father off, and begged him not to go.

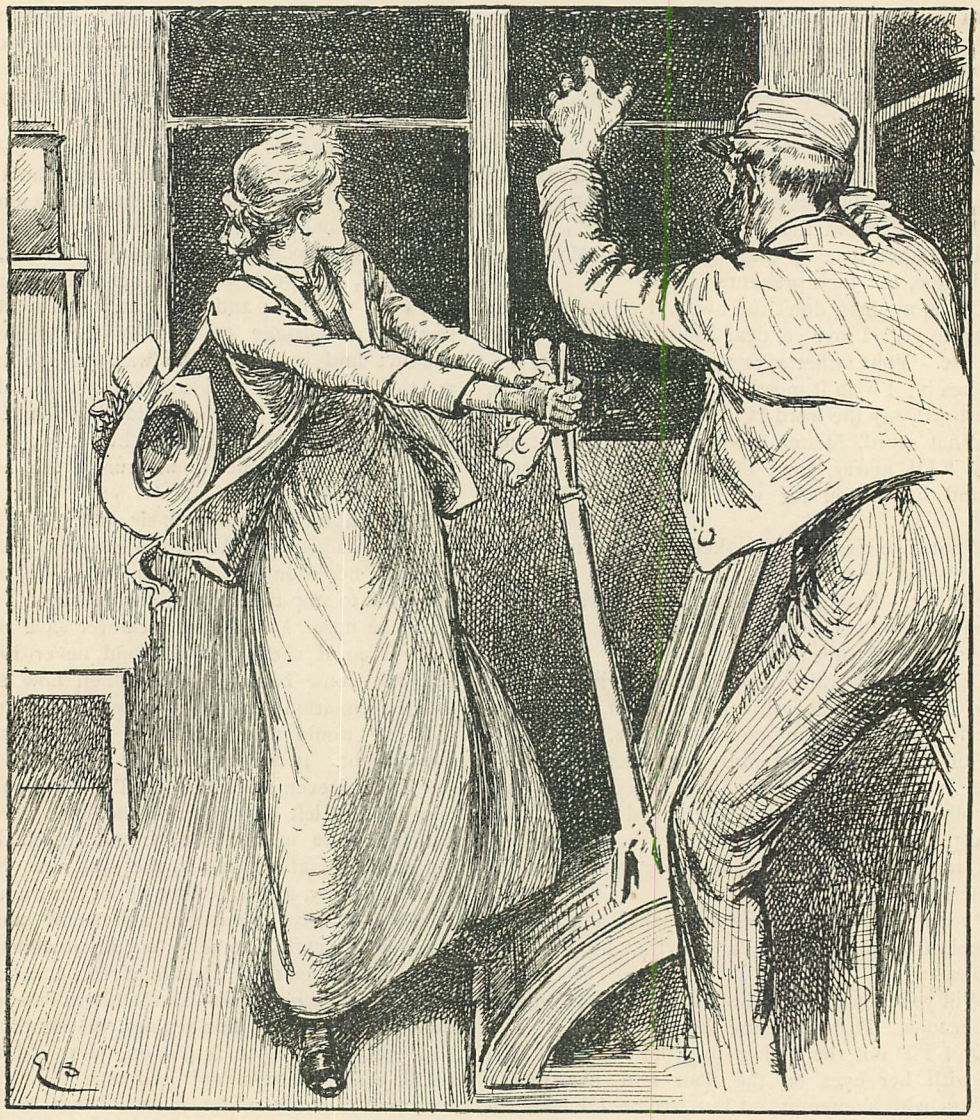
"'What's the matter with you?' he asked roughly.

'You're as pale as whitewash! Go to bed! Are you afraid of a little thunder?'

"'No. Oh, father! don't go away to-night. Please don't. I'm afraid that something will happen.'

"But he only laughed at her, and made some remarks which displeased her. So she turned red with anger, and flounced away to her room, very much put out, but very determined. The clock struck six as he rode off, and she locked herself in her room until seven. Then she dressed, and, creepin' downstairs, searched for the little pistol in her father's room. But it was not there. Still she found a loaded stick—and she had plenty of muscle to use it. She took this. All was quiet upstairs. She went out by the long window in the parlour into the garden, and as she reached the yard at the back a flash of sheet-lightning quivered behind the palin's. She climbed the gate, and got into the road as the church clock was striking half after seven.

"She stood still and listened."



"'COME AWAY, I TELL YOU!' CRIED JACK, NOW DESPERATE" (*p.* 605).

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

FOILED!

"NOT a sound broke the stillness after the clock ceased to strike. The trees were steady, the wind didn't stir a leaf on the ground, and yet I remember the queer feeling of someone breathin' which was in the air. As I sat on the platform yonder, smokin', I could see the flickering flashes, like a transparency, in the sky; and

afterwards the night was darker than ever. Mary Simmons went out along the line, unseen, in the direction of the signal-box, never mindin' the distant storm. We at the station could see forked lightning now and then, and the thunder growled out loudly at times, sometimes with a savage snap. But Mary went on ; and this is what happened :

"She got to the box about a quarter to eight, and went up boldly to the door. For once, I dare say, Jack Stone wasn't very pleased to see her, but he shook hands, and even tried to snatch a kiss ; but this Mary avoided. The clock in the cabin pointed to ten minutes to eight, and she was puzzled what to do. So was Jack.

"'Well, here I am,' she said; 'and you don't seem over-pleased to see me, either. You want me to go, I suppose?'

"'No, indeed, Molly ; but I'm listenin' for the beats. Does your father know you came here?'

"'Not he. You asked me to come, and here I am. What's all these rods?'

"'Levers for the signals, of course. If I pull one it moves the light from white to red, which means danger and stops a train.'

"'Oh!' ejaculated Mary; 'I see ; and those boxes?'

"'Those are electric instruments which ring from the next box, and show whether my signals are on or off. There's a bell : counts six—that is, "special,"' he gasped, moistening his white lips. 'Now I'll take off the signal, and the train will come on.'

"'Suppose it was not taken off,' said Mary, comin' close to him, and putting her fingers on the fellow's sleeve, caressing like, but deathly pale.

"'Then the train would pull up, and wait till the stoppage was explained,' he said, clasping her waist as he spoke. She made no resistance then, but he let her go, pulled the signal off, and looked out. Apparently not quite satisfied, he whistled gently, and a murmured 'All right' came up from the metals. But Mary heard it, and felt sick with fear.

"'You *must* go, Molly,' said Stone suddenly. 'My inspector may come in any minute, and if you're here he'll fine me. So go now, there's a good girl.'

"'You are very cool, I must say. Is this your pretended love? I'll not go till I please—I'm very comfortable,' she said, leaning against the lever ; 'so you can go on. Look at the lightning ; isn't it close?'

"'A sight too close to please me,' muttered the guilty wretch. 'Now, Mary, it isn't rainin' yet. Go home, I tell ye! Your father——'

"'Is away; and you know that, Mister Stone. What's that bell?'

"'The special is at the next box, about a mile and a half away. You *must* go!'

"'I shan't!' she replied, clutching the lever which moved the down distance signal. 'Here I'll stay for the present, any way.'

"Her fingers were trying to move the catch : the strong spring which held the signal in its place. But she could not loose it.

"'Come away, I tell you!' cried Jack, now desperate. 'You *shall* come, I swear!'

"He clutched her waist. She held tightly to the lever, and just as her strength was failing the catch was loosed ; the signal lever fell back with a clang, and the signal turned to red in the cutting in the very face of Silas Profitt on the ingin!

"He shut off the steam, and ran down to the signal-box. It didn't take him long to stop, dismount, and rush into the signal-cabin. A faintin' woman in Jack's arms, and that woman Mary Simmons, whom he loved! A pretty sight for Silas!

"He was about mad when he saw them, but as he was finishin' some words to Stone, Mary Simmons rose up and cried, 'Oh! you are safe, then, Silas!'

"'Safe?' muttered the ingin-driver ; 'what d'ye mean by safe? What business or pleasure have *you* here in this scoundrel's cabin, lyin' in his arms?'

"'She's goin' to be my wife,' replied Jack ; 'and I'll trouble you to keep a civil tongue in your head. Molly's goin' to marry me.'

"'I'm not!' she says, standin' up. 'Never, Jack Stone, will I marry a "wrecker"! Listen, Silas, my dear, listen——'

"'Hold your tongue!' roared Jack, seizing the loaded stick Mary had dropped. 'Hold your tongue, or I'll brain you!'

"'I shall not. Silas, listen——'

"Before Silas could interfere Jack had raised his arm, and in a second would have struck the girl, had not a terrific flash of fire darted in and knocked him and her senseless on the floor. The lightning had gone off the wire somehow and struck Stone down, only stunning Mary.

"Silas was blinded a'most, and when he came to he couldn't see. So the fireman and guards came up, and after a while Miss Mary told the story—screenin' her father, of course.

"When the body of Jack Stone had been inspected he was found dead. Mary was ill from shock, but Silas had nigh lost his sight, so the fireman took the train on when the obstruction had been removed. Mary saved the train, sir!"

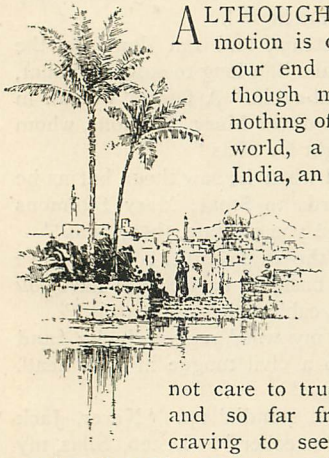
"But what was the end of it?" I asked.

"Well, sir, Miss Mary made them take the ingin-driver home, and she nursed him herself. Old Simmons knew that she knew all about his wickedness, and he behaved like a lamb. After many weeks Silas began to see a bit, but he couldn't ever see to drive an ingin again, though he got well in time.

"So days went. He wouldn't, being poor, ask Mary—who got a big reward—to marry him. She couldn't ask him herself; and they'd a-drifted off if she hadn't made up her mind to incite her father to appoint Silas his overseer: which he did. 'But,' says old Simmons, 'if you take the post you must be a married man,' he says.

"Silas pricked up his ears and looked at Molly. She blushed at her darin', but Silas guessed it all. He spoke out; so they were married, and have gone off now, sir. But they're happy and well off, for Silas Profitt is an engineer in a big 'Works,' and is as devoted to Mary as she is to him."

THE NEARER EAST.

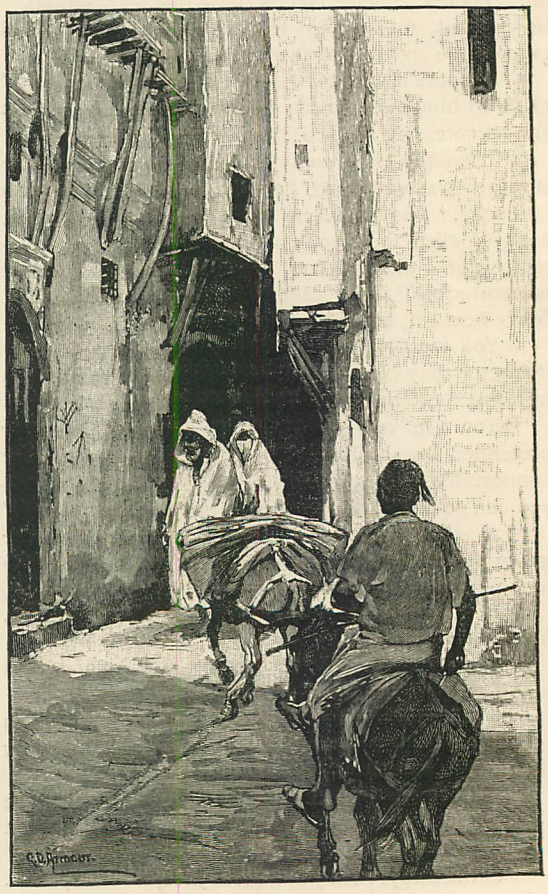


ALTHOUGH easy and rapid locomotion is one of the luxuries of our end of the century, and though many travellers think nothing of a journey round the world, a cold-weather trip to India, an excursion to Japan, or a run over to San Francisco, still it is a "far cry" even now to some of the ends of the earth, and there are timorous souls who do not care to trust themselves so long and so far from home. Yet the craving to see the world and the wonders thereof is sometimes strong even in the least venturesome minds.

The East especially, with its immemorial associations, has a fascination for natures the least curious and the least imaginative. But it is a long way to India, and the sea-voyage is a terror to many ; Cairo is distant and expensive ; the Nile means a sojourn of many weeks and a full purse ; while the trip through Palestine is still complicated as to details, in spite of the ubiquitous influence of "personal conductors." But there is a nearer East than these if people would only realise the fact—an East within fifty hours of London, to be reached by a journey as direct as the crow's flight, and as simple and rapid as modern travel can make it. What is less formidable than the journey to Marseilles? And, once there, what is simpler than the transfer of self and baggage on board one of the lively little steamers which are bound all the days of the week save one or two for the harbour of Algiers? The boat starts, let us say, at mid-day, and the eyes which close upon the brilliant, many-towned coast of France—upon Europe in one of its most highly-civilised and hackneyed aspects—open upon a scene of the most striking and brilliant contrast—upon the shining white terraces of a tiny oriental city, climbing the cone of an abrupt hillside, and stretching out into the blue waters of its famous harbour the long arm of its ancient, storm-beaten mole.

This is Algiers : French Algiers, it is true—in some respects very French indeed, and even more English—but Algiers all the same, still a city of the East, as truly as Cairo or Damascus, still delightfully redolent of the Arabian Nights, and where, across the slender stage of French colonial and English fashionable civilisation, there still stalk the wild figures of the tent, the desert, and the caravan. Its mixture of races, its babel of tongues, its wonderful medley of costumes, complexions, manners, and customs, its muddle of architectures, its varieties of vegetation, half-tropical and half-European—combine to make Algiers a place of cosmopolitan, perhaps, rather than of precisely unique fascination. But the East, and things Eastern, undoubtedly do predominate, and the feeling that one is out of Europe ("It is such a *rest* to be out of Europe!" somebody once said) is the first of many new impressions which crowd upon your mind as you step ashore on the piers of the Algerian harbour.

Algiers does not, as is a common impression, face directly north. It creeps round the sharp curve of its own bay, and its outgoing suburb of Mustapha, where the English live and the hotels are, almost faces the rising sun. From Mustapha, across the foaming curve of the bay, and across the green levels of the Metidja Plain, may be seen the ranges of the Atlas and Djudjura Mountains, piled one against the other in splendid relief against the varying sky. From the higher summits of the suburb of El Biar, beyond Mustapha, the more purely seaward view is to be had in greater perfection. Here, from the rose-grown terraces of some favoured villa, you may look down upon the placid harbour, with its varied shipping and its group of ancient buildings, and you may stand and



IN THE MOORISH TOWN.

watch, in contemplative moments of lovely afternoons, the slow, graceful sweep of some outgoing vessel, as she rounds the angle of the mole and breasts the outer waters of the bluest and most treacherous sea in the world.

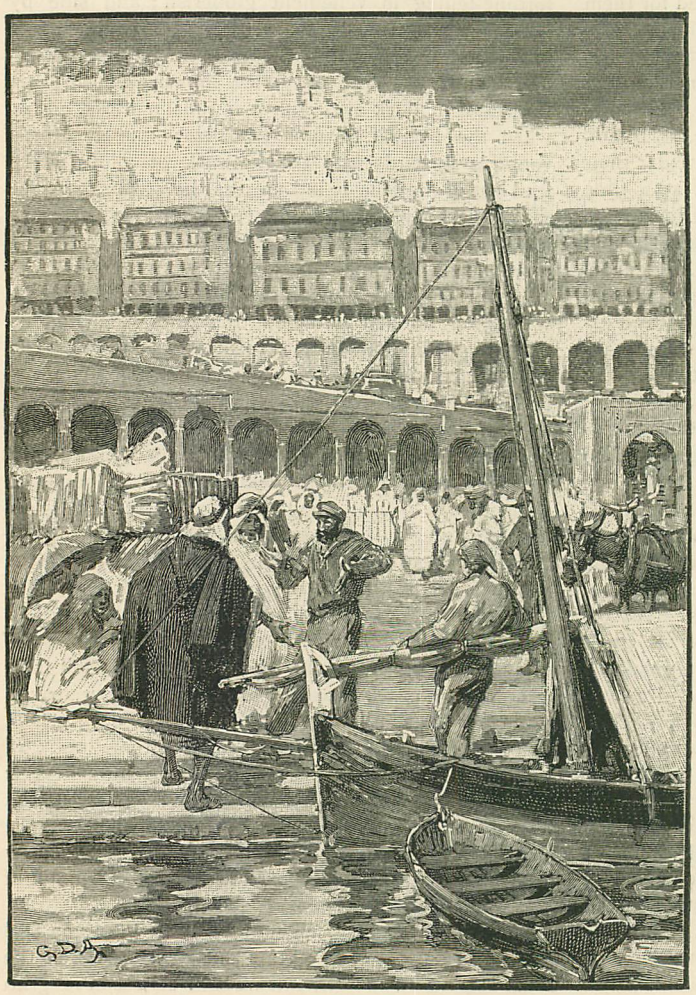
But there is no doubt that these beautiful views, so delightful to the pleasure-seeker, once wore a very baneful aspect to other eyes. Up into the blue vaults of this superb and cloudless sky, across that glittering strip of sea, along the dazzling white walls of mosque and terrace, there once wandered weary and hopeless glances, dim with the heart-sickness of the exile and black with the hatred of the slave. For the traditions of Algiers were for centuries the traditions of slavery; and ever since its foundation by some Arab prince, in or about the tenth century, the little white town, with its fortress and its sheltered harbour, gave refuge to the renegades and adventurers of every nation, and was the centre of every sort of lawlessness and barbarity, until a period not by any means distant from the present. To Algiers, in the fourteenth century, fled the Moors of Spain, at the time of their expulsion from Europe; and from there they kept up that warfare against the civilised powers which gained for them in time such names as the Nation of Corsairs and the Scourge of Christendom. Their galleys scoured the sea, and were the pest of every nation; no flag was sacred to them, and their prisoners of every nationality became slaves, to be ransomed, it might be, or, if not, to work out their lives in exile and slavery under their conquerors. It is difficult to believe that at a time within the memory of our own grandfathers, there were no fewer than twelve hundred Christian slaves in Algiers. It was not until 1816 that the English and Dutch fleets combined successfully bombarded the fierce little capital of the corsairs, forced its governor to yield, and exacted a treaty which insured the liberation of slaves without ransom, and practically abolished Christian slavery and Algerian piracy for ever. A chain of subsequent events, trivial enough in themselves, led to the acquisition of Algeria by the French. In 1830 Algiers fell to the French guns, and its colonisation under the French has been proceeding by slow degrees ever since. It is certain that much unnecessary cruelty marked the French conquest, and has borne bitter fruit in the hatred of the Arab tribes towards their conquerors; but those dark days are over now, and the native of Algeria, if he is not a devoted vassal of the great Republic has, at least, no longer much to complain of. Peace reigns, and where slaves once toiled, and pirates landed, and armies bled, the languid step of the invalid now paces the sunny terraces of Mustapha, and eager tourists turn their faces towards the desert and all the joys of travel in the "interior."

As we have said, the town of Algiers wears at first sight a decidedly cosmopolitan aspect. But this is only true of the French, or lower town, which consists, roughly speaking, of three long parallel streets, converging towards a central square—the Place du Gouvernement, which, but for a group of palm-trees at one side, might be the shabby *place* of any little French provincial town. There is the Boulevard de la République, facing the harbour, with a handsome frontage of hotels, offices, arcades, and shops. There is the Rue Bab Azoun, entirely composed of European shops, where French and English do their household shopping; and above that again is the Rue de la Lyre, a street of mixtures, where the native element first begins to predominate. These streets are alive with business and movement, with the comings and goings of the infinitely varied population of the town. Under the dingy arcades of the Bab Azoun French and English, American and Moor, Arab and Jew, Spanish and Portuguese, Kabyle, Negro, and Turk, and every other variation of the peculiarly mongrel races for which Algiers is famed, rub shoulders with perfect impartiality. The brilliant uniform of the Zouave or of the Chasseur d'Afrique clashes in a confusion of colours with the scarlet *burnous* of the Spahi, or soldier of the native regiment; the picturesque rags of the Arab, draped about his tall, gaunt figure with a certain native dignity, contrast in a striking manner with the greasy broad-cloth of the French citizen; neat English and smart American maidens are jostled by the bold gipsy women, who rush at them in the open street and begin fortune-telling in vehement gibberish; and side by side with the trim Frenchwoman in high heels and higher hat waddles the inmate of the harem, a formless bundle of white draperies, showing nothing but the velvet of dark eyes above a muslin mask. It is when the French town is left below, and the tourist ventures upwards into the network of alleys which lead out of the Rue de la Lyre, that he begins to realise that Algiers is really an oriental city. He might go much farther and fare worse in this respect, for anything more genuinely "native" than the Moorish town of Algiers it would be difficult to find. The blank, white walls, the blinded windows, the grim, iron-studded portals, speak eloquently of oriental seclusion. The mysterious, veiled figures of women slipping noiselessly from street to street; the water-carriers balancing pitchers upon well-accustomed shoulder-blades; the merchants sitting cross-legged in their open shops; the bearded, patriarchal-looking men, in gorgeous raiment, who pause to haggle, to converse, or to greet an acquaintance—all breathe of the Arabian Nights. Now you come upon the bustle of a little native market, where fruits and vegetables, and clotted masses of dates, and sacks of grain are exposed for sale. Now you are squeezed up against the wall by the passing of a laden troop of miserable little donkeys, goaded from behind by a cruel, shouting, and gesticulating driver. From the house-tops the unveiled faces of women look down at you, and promptly disappear if you look up; charming children, as bright as humming-birds in their vivid little vests and jackets, cross your path at every turn and play about your feet; and from the doors of native cafés come the subdued voices of men playing cards and dominoes, and sipping coffee out of tiny vessels like egg-cups.

When you reach the summit of the town you find the Casbah or citadel—an ancient fortress, which the little city wears as its crown—which stands in its grim entirety a witness to many a dark page in the history

of Algiers. From this point you probably descend by an outer road, and so descending, you come upon a mosque in a garden of palms. This is the Mosque of Sidi Abder Rahman, and its graceful minaret pierces the sky with a dazzling whiteness, picked out with a few coloured tiles. The afternoon breeze sighs through the palms of the Jardin Marengo: down the long flight of steps to the mosque go shuffling the wild, ungainly figures of its worshippers, and beyond them and through the framing branches of mimosa and palm you catch glimpses of an almost purple sea. Such a scene photographs itself upon the memory, and in colours! It is an Eastern fairyland—something quite un-European, quite unlike the Nineteenth Century. The impression is not destroyed when you enter upon the cool, arcaded silence of the mosque. About its matted floors, stand, or kneel, or lie, the perfectly motionless figures of the worshippers in the various attitudes of prayer. As you pass them (on your stocking-soles—for you must ignominiously leave your boots at the entrance) not by a flicker of the eyelid, not by the shadow of a change in the stern and immovable expression of their faces, do they betray a consciousness of your presence. They worship in silence; no sound reaches them but the dripping of a fountain in the outer court, or, perhaps, from some inner sanctum, the drone of a voice which is reading monotonously the stored wisdom of the Koran.

Such is Algiers the town in its modern and in its Moorish aspect. Round and about it the country breaks into the gentle undulations of the Sahel range, low hills, which are in places well wooded, in others dotted with villas and gardens, and in others again covered with heath and ling. On the eastern slope of these Mustapha, the fashionable suburb, suns itself, a sprinkling of hotels and villas, which nestle in the midst of fir and eucalyptus woods, of gardens, and orange-groves and pleasure grounds. Between these, and threading the country in every direction, wind and climb the narrow, deep-cut, stony Arab lanes, overhung with wild hedges of the cactus and the aloe, and where every branch that meets above your head is twined and hung with wreaths of the pale, ivory-tinted clematis and trails and tendrils of the delicate wild vine. But the charm of suburban Algiers is in its gardens, where as the season advances and the April days grow long and the nights balmy, there is a luxuriance of blossoming shrubs, a riot of flowers, which passes description. Violets bloom early in the year, and make beds and borders purple, and the whole air sweet, before March, but they need care and cultivation. It is the rose, *par excellence*, that runs riot in these delightful gardens. The *Gloire de Dijon* covers every available wall with a solid weight of blossom; the delicate lemon-tinted *Maréchal Niel*, and wild sprays of the *Banksia*, yellow and white, clamber over terraces and arbours, pillars and balustrades, while every delicate variety of *La France* and *Fortune's Yellow*, and the whole delightful family of tea and monthly roses make themselves everywhere at home. In the cooler place of every garden is a thicket of arum lilies, breast-high; the walks are bordered with tall white irises; beds of petunias and geraniums, ixias, and sparaxis blaze in the sun. Blossoming trees and shrubs make arbours everywhere; oranges and lemons still hang on the glossy green branches, some of which are already breaking into heavily-scented bridal bloom. The blood-red purple of the *Bougainvillea* spreads itself like a mantle over the white villa-walls, and here and there the deep plum-colour of the Judas tree puts the pale tints of the lilac to shame. In the gardens



LANDING AT ALGIERS.

ON THE BORDERS OF THE DESERT.

of the older Arab villas on the slopes of Mustapha and El Biar a picturesque neglect is allowed to prevail. Many of them are half-deserted, and the stranger may wander through them almost at will. In such a garden on a hot night of May or June the nightingale sings in the deep shadow of the mimosa hedges, and the cuckoo answers her from the pine wood across the gully, and to these delicate solos the harsh, dry croaking of the frogs in the slimy garden tanks makes a grotesque and not altogether disagreeable accompaniment.

It is a fact that lovers of the Riviera have seen or say they have seen, something like this before. The rose, the palm, and the orange abound on the south coasts of France and in Italy, and are not, of course, peculiar to North Africa. The charm of novelty in Algiers is perhaps more potent in certain of its aspects of desolation and loneliness than in its luxuriance of gardens and flowers. When the suburb, and the villas, and the woods are left behind, the country becomes wild, open, and arid. Dusty highways stretch in every direction over the uplands of the Sahel, and meander vaguely across the interminable levels of the plain below. These you may follow for hours, and meet nothing but the curious, high, native coaches lumbering along through the dust, from the hooded roofs of which wild, dark faces look down at you with their impassive stare. The Plain itself, the Metidja, is a curiosity to European eyes, and has, if not beauty, its own unique fascination. It is green and fertile enough, now with vineyards, now with wheatfields (which are streaked with the purple of the wild gladiola, growing lavishly among the green), and now with acres of the sweet-scented geranium from which certain strong essences are distilled. It is in the twilight that the prairie-like stretches of these flats grow weird to the eye; only here and there a jagged clump of cactus starts up against the red sky-line, or a palm, rising in solitary slenderness, breaks, while it only seems to accentuate, the illimitable loneliness of the plain.

It is in these lonelier tracts, too, that you catch glimpses of a wild and wandering life, which make you realise that you are in the land of the Great Desert. Wild figures start up by the lonely roadways, which startle you with their barbaric air; out of miserable Arab huts, under the palmetto and cactus-scrub of some scorched hill-top, troops of nearly naked children rush out at you, and women, bare-footed and bare-legged, with scanty draperies clasped about their persons with pieces of barbaric jewellery, stand staring as you pass by. As you pick your steps down the declivities of some Arab lane, you may be startled at any moment by the apparition of the long train of a gipsy caravan wending its way back, with laden horses and mules, with women and children and black-eyed babies, to native desert places in the interior. Such sad, stern faces stare at you from under the tattered, *burnous* hoods! You feel that through these fluttering rags the scorching wind of the desert has blown, and that desert sands are sifted in their folds. And there is the strange feeling with these wild figures that they are—while yet they are not—familiar. The actual eye has not before beheld them, but to the mind's eye they are fraught with the familiarity of innermost and earliest association. The Picture Bible of one's childhood was full of such figures, just so draped, with just such dark faces, and just such tall, gaunt, solemn forms. Abraham at the tent-door, Isaac as he went to meet Rebecca, Balaam as he bestrode the ass, Ishmael as he clung to the garments of the repudiated Hagar,

these seem to live again in the wild and yet majestic figures of this strange land, which is—and yet is not—the East, and which, though it is hardly nearer the Promised Land than is the fashionable and familiar Riviera, yet seems to be haunted with associations which take us back to the very beginning of things.

Such, then, is Algiers, in a few of her aspects, as she appeared to one who hardly wandered out of sight of her white walls, and who lives in hope of returning to her again, and exploring further the surrounding country which bears her name. The "interior," the borders of the Great Desert itself are within easy reach of Algiers, and so are the highlands and the fastnesses of Kabylia. Within less than a week of London, with the roar of Piccadilly, and the clamour of the Strand, still in his ears, the traveller may thus behold the Sahara and ride (on camels, if he likes) to the very verge of the vanishing mirage, or he may climb the Atlas and boast that he has seen the sun set from one, at least, of the giant ranges of the world.

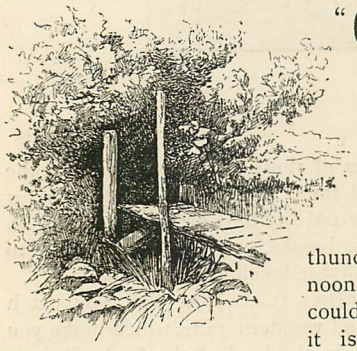
CHARLOTTE STEWART.

BARBARA MERIVALE.

By ARABELLA M. HOPKINSON, Author of "The Probation of Dorothy Travers," "Vere Thornleigh's Inheritance," "A Woman's Strength," etc. etc.

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON.



"GOOD-BYE, Barbara. Then we shall see you again on Tuesday; and please be more punctual than you were to-day. Oh, yes; I know it was the thunderstorm this afternoon; of course you could not help that; but it is so essential that Evy, delicate as she is, should have her meals punctually. And, by the by, if you are bringing her any fresh music, don't be *quite* so classical, please. Let her have something light and cheerful, which her father would enjoy. Good-bye; *au revoir*"; and, with a nod and a smile, Mrs. Murray turned round to pick her way along the wet gravel back to the house, from whence she had just accompanied Barbara Merivale down the drive.

"I am very glad I showed Barbara plainly that I do not approve of her being late," she murmured to herself. "It is just as well to put one's foot down at once on that kind of thing, particularly with such a young girl as she is. That is one advantage of having her for Evy, I can say what I like to her, and certainly she teaches extremely well—far better than Danski, and half the money. She looks very ill," she added cheerfully. "I should not wonder if she were to break down some day. It would be a great pity, for I don't know how the family could get on without her."

Meanwhile, Barbara pursued her way home through the woods, looking furtively around her, lest Oliver should suddenly spring up, and remembering with relief that he had said something at luncheon-time about being engaged to meet Mr. Holmes that evening. She had not had a pleasant time at the Murrays'. Mrs. Murray had taken her severely to task before her daughter for being late; Evelyn had been flippant and densely stupid, so that she was thankful to be out of the house, and alone again.

"Well, it won't be for much longer," she thought to herself. "I wonder what Mrs. Murray will say when she hears of it?" and then she shivered as she suddenly realised all that those words meant.

Mr. Denzil's wife! Yes, she had accepted him under the Queen's Oak this afternoon, had consented to be his. He would go back to London probably on Monday, and tell Richmond—she smiled as she thought of it—that they were engaged. Minnie, too, would know it; and soon they would all come down to Denzilstone; she would be congratulated, made much of; perhaps Lord and Lady Denzil might even—although it was not likely—be pleased; they had always been so kind to her.

She would meet Richmond—already in imagination she saw that meeting—perhaps in the big drawing-room at Denzilstone, perhaps in Centrewood street; but wherever it might be, she would be able to look into his face and wish him joy, and ask for his good wishes in return without flinching. Thus she mused and speculated as she walked home through the woods, absorbed in the triumphant vision of proving to Richmond undeniably that she had cared for him as little as he had cared for her. And all the time she was keeping resolutely at bay the recollection that this triumph must be dearly bought, even at the cost of becoming Oliver's wife; whilst deep down in her heart the dull ache that had never left her since Lord Denzil's visit seemed to have grown suddenly intolerably acute.

Somehow or other she got through the evening at home, with all its manifold duties; giving her father his tea; putting baby to bed; then out again to the choir practice—she had undertaken the post of organist lately, to save expense—and then at last home to supper, too tired out in body and mind to eat anything. Mrs. Merivale looked at her with inquisitive eyes. She had hoped she hardly knew what, but something vague and delightful, from her stepdaughter's walk this afternoon with Mr. Denzil; but evidently

nothing had come of it, or Barbara would hardly have kept it to herself, and be sitting there eating nothing, and looking white and dull. She was disappointed, poor woman; and her disappointment found its vent in asperity.

"You had better go to bed, Barbara," she said sharply, "if you mean to sit here and eat nothing, for you look more dead than alive. I can't think what you do to yourself. You are losing all your good looks." Barbara smiled faintly.

"All right, mother; I will go. Good-night," she said, suiting the action to the word, and Mrs. Merivale could hardly believe her ears or eyes; for Barbara, as a rule, was not fond of going to bed, and certainly not as early as half-past nine.

Alone in her bedroom, she threw herself on her bed, and covered her face with her hands.

"What have I done? what have I done?" she moaned. "Oh! what have I done?"

All the triumph, the exultation over Richmond had died out of her, leaving her face to face with the bare naked fact that she had promised to become Oliver Denzil's wife—promised to live with him for all the days of her life. She must have been mad when she did it! the mere idea of it now made her shudder. How could she marry a man for whom she did not care one atom, when only ten days ago—was it only ten days? it seemed like ten years—she had loved with all her heart and soul—she coloured crimson as she thought of it—another? No, she could not inflict this wrong on herself, and certainly not on him. He was good, true, generous, the best and kindest of friends to them all: above all, to her father; and yet she could not face, even in imagination, a life stretching through a long vista of years spent alone with him.

How long she sat thus on the bed thinking she did not know. She was roused at last to action by the thought of to-morrow. To-morrow he had asked to come and see her early, and of course he would be at morning church, would accompany her home afterwards and speak to Mr. Merivale—she turned cold as she thought of it—and then it would be too late. She must write to him at once, without a moment's delay, and tell him—what? that she had changed her mind. In a second she had slipped off the bed, had sat down to her table, pulled out her writing things, and had written "Dear Mr. Denzil," and there she stopped.

Oh! the shame, the humiliation to have to tell him how in the course of only a few hours she had altered her mind, and could never be his wife. What could he, what would he, think of her—he who loved her so dearly? She could see him now as he stood before her in the wood this afternoon, his plain features so transformed by love that they were scarcely recognisable; she could hear his voice, usually so calm and equable, vibrating with the force of passion, as he repeated again and again, "I love you so."

The church clock rang out ten; there was not a moment to be lost. In a kind of frenzy she dashed off the note which was to put an end to all his hopes. She scarcely knew what she wrote, but when she had finished it she read it over, and decided to let it go as it was. It was very confused, but there could be no doubt as to its meaning, and Mr. Denzil would understand; he always did understand. At the end she added: "Please, please, forgive me, for I can never forgive myself"; and then she signed and addressed it.

Well, it was done now; there was no time to go back; the question was how to get it to Denzilstone at half-past ten on a Saturday night. She went to her window and looked out. An exquisite night, soft, balmy, fragrant; the heavens bright with stars, everything quiet, peaceful, hushed. Centrewood, in spite of its being Saturday night, was gone to rest; there was no possibility of getting her note up to the "House" now; she must resign herself to waiting until to-morrow morning. Throwing it down on the table, she drew her chair up to the window, and sat down to try and realise the consequences of her action. What would Mr. Denzil say? She had never known him otherwise than kind, gentle, thoughtful for others, a little grave, perhaps, and always, whatever he did, even if he were playing the most trivial game, tremendously in earnest; but she had an idea, born partly of instinct, partly of what she had gathered from Richmond, that he could be very angry at times, and that his anger, like everything else about him, was in earnest. Would he be angry with her? She shivered as she thought about it. How could she face him if he were, seeing how fully she deserved it. "Because I love you so." The words kept on recurring to her memory, bringing with them much pain, and yet also comfort. No, she did not think he would be angry with her, and yet she would rather face him angry than sorrowful. But he was strong and reserved. Perhaps he would take her letter quite quietly, and say nothing about it; and then he would go back to London, where he had hundreds of engrossing interests, and soon forget all about her. Men could forget very quickly, she knew that only too well; and after all, she had only done what was right, she was sure of that. She was certain that if she had gone to her father and confessed it all to him, and asked his advice, he would have told her that she must not, dare not, marry any man, much less such a man as Oliver Denzil, for the miserable motive of restoring her own wounded pride.

She was roused from her meditations by becoming suddenly aware that baby was sitting up in her cot, looking at her with grave sleepy eyes. Barbara was glad of the diversion; her head and heart were alike tired out with the conflict; she got up and went to her little sister.

"You must go to sleep, my babs," she said, kissing her fondly. "Lie down again, that's a darling."

"Why don't 'oo tum to bed, Bab?" asked baby, her eyes growing ominously wakeful.

"I'm coming very soon now; no, sweet"—as baby made a dart at her hair, with a view to pulling it down—"you mustn't play now. You must go to sleep."

"Then 'oo must 'ing to me," returned the young lady imperiously, and Barbara meekly obeyed. She laid the child down in her cot, shaking up her pillow, and tucking her up with deft, loving hands—she was

always at her best with children and her father, with anything weak or helpless—crooning to her a monotonous sleepy lullaby, till the blue eyes had closed, and the soft regular breathing proclaimed that baby was asleep again. Soothed by this reflection, she, at last, bethought herself of going to bed, and an hour later, utterly wearied out, she was sleeping as soundly as her little sister.

The next day was Sunday—as a rule, Barbara's happiest day in the week, the one on which she saw more of her father than at any other time. The morning, however, was always a very busy one for her, and to-day she was thankful for it. She had despatched her note to Denzilstone very early, and she was grateful to the demands made on her attention by the Sunday-school, by the organ and the Church service, by the boys and baby: all of which helped to keep at bay that nightmare of what Oliver would do or say. Thus the morning wore away, early dinner was over, and still he made no sign.

Thankful to have reached half-past three in the afternoon undisturbed, she took her book and baby—left in her charge—and established herself under the cedar-tree in the garden, to enjoy the only quiet, lazy hour she now could call her own in the week.

The calm, almost sleepy, hush of Sunday afternoon lay on the Vicarage; the boys were all gone to the children's service, and afterwards to tea at the Thorntons'; Mrs. Merivale had taken Barbara's place beside her father's sofa, and sent her downstairs to take charge of baby in the garden under the cedar-tree. It was all very sweet and peaceful; through the open window upstairs came Mrs. Merivale's monotonous voice, reading aloud to her husband; the bees were humming drowsily amongst the flowers; Barbara, sleepy and tired, could almost have believed that the events of yesterday were all an unpleasant dream, when suddenly opening her eyes, she was recalled to their reality by seeing Oliver's tall figure striding across the grass towards her. In a moment she was sitting bolt upright, gathering together all her courage as she glanced at him nervously to see what the expression of his countenance might portend. Then she gave a sigh of intense relief, for there was no anger depicted there. He was a little paler than usual, and he looked grave; otherwise, he was the same as usual. The next minute he was shaking hands with her almost as though nothing had happened.

"I have taken a liberty," he said. "I found the little gate in the wall open, and so I came in without asking if you were at home. I knew pretty well that I should find you in the garden at this hour, and alone"—her heart stood still—"and I wanted to answer your letter in person."

He had received it, then; he was come to reproach her. She gave him a swift glance. Now that he was close to her, she could see that he looked ill; or was it only her imagination?

"Yes," was all she could reply. "Won't you sit down?" she added, remembering her manners. He complied at once, and taking his chair, placed it at right angles to hers.

"I am sorry you wrote me that letter, Barbara," he said gently, plunging at once into the subject. "If you had only given me a trial."

"Oh!" she cried, "if you only knew how sorry I am too; not for that letter, but for yesterday. Mr. Denzil, will you—will you— forgive me?"

"Dear," he answered, "I have nothing to forgive. I startled you yesterday when you were flurried and possibly upset by the thunder, and I was inconsiderate in pressing you for an answer before you knew your own mind. I must beg your forgiveness, not you mine. I am come now to ask you one thing: is that letter irrevocable?"

She bowed her head mutely. She could not speak; she was too overwhelmed by his generosity.

"You don't think," he pleaded, "that you could consent to be engaged to me, and try if you could not grow to like me in time?"

"Don't," she cried, "don't please speak to me like that! Indeed, I am not worthy of it."

"But I want to know, dear," he answered, with gentle persistence. "Tell me the truth, for I would rather hear it. I know now—in fact, I always did know it, and therefore I had no business to ask you that question yesterday—that you do not care for me. In the excitement of yesterday you said 'Yes,' but on thinking it over last night you came to the conclusion that you could not be my wife, and in your honesty and truthfulness you wrote to tell me so. I quite understand all that"—he always did understand, Barbara thought to herself—"but don't you think that if you were to allow yourself now to be engaged to me for as long as ever you like, the day might come when, besides tolerating me, you might even grow fond of me, and then—I would wait for you, as Jacob waited for Rachel, for five, ten, twelve years; I would never worry or torment you in any way, but I would hope on until I had conquered your love. What do you say?" Once more the old temptation to triumph over Richmond and Minnie fluttered up in her heart, to be dispelled by one glance at the man by her side.

"I couldn't," she murmured, colouring scarlet; "please, please, don't ask me." Her distress was so real that it went to his heart.

"Forgive me, dearest, for teasing you," he said, fighting vigorously to conceal the pain he felt at her evident repugnance to him. "I will not ask again. Only, Barbara—look up, dear; I want you to understand what I am going to say." She obeyed, and he saw then that her eyes were full of tears. The sight of them filled him with a wild desire to take her in his arms and comfort her, but he repressed it sternly, and pretending not to notice them, went on with what he was saying.

"It is this, dear," he continued: "I love you. I don't think you will ever know how much; and my love is just as strong to-day as it was yesterday, and will be always. I shall always love you, and I shall never give up the hope of making you my wife. I know very well that I am not the sort of man to attract a young, beautiful English girl like you at the first set-off; but I also believe that if you got to know

me sufficiently, if you could get over my plainness, my American accent, expressions, and so on, you might find me not absolutely unlovable, and so I intend to try—I give you fair warning. I mean to make you love me if I can—my love cannot injure you, darling—and if at any time you feel an answering chord in your heart, and you can write to me or tell me 'Oliver, I love you,' you will find me ready—waiting. I am English in one respect: I do not know when I am beaten; and it seems to me that, loving you as I do, I must conquer you in time."

He looked as though he meant what he said. Gently as he spoke, his face was resolute.

"You don't know," she answered, "you don't understand. There is something"—her voice sinking to a whisper—"something I ought—to—tell you, but I can't—I can't."

"Why should you?" he answered. "I am dealing with the future, not the past. I shall know quite enough if ever you grow to care for me. In the meantime, perhaps you will let me write to you now and then, occasionally send you books, if I may. Will you allow me that pleasure, dear?"

The tenderness of his voice and manner, his gentleness, almost overcame Barbara. She could hardly keep back her tears.

"Oh, don't, don't speak like that to me!" she cried again. "Indeed, indeed, I do not deserve it. Give up all thought of me," she added. "I am not worthy of you." He smiled.

"I think I am the best judge of that," he said. "As to giving you up, you might as well tell me to give up my life. I would as soon do one as the other. I will never give you up until you are married to another, or——"

At this juncture baby, who had shown remarkable sagacity hitherto in taking no notice of the pair, being immersed in some little private occupation of her own, came toddling up to Oliver.

"Mitter Denil," she cried, thrusting into his hand a very hot little bunch of daisies—"'ese for 'oo."

"Thank you, baby, very much. I shall take them as a good omen."

"Has 'oo any cocly?" inquired baby, climbing up on his knee and poking her little fingers into the regions of his pockets.

"'YOU MUST GO TO SLEEP, MY BABS,' SHE SAID" (*p.* 611).

"Dear me! I forgot to get any yesterday," he answered. "I am so sorry. I will send you some from London, shall I?"

"Ees, pease. I lub cocly. I lub 'oo too. Me div 'oo a daisy tain;" and back she toddled to Barbara, seizing the daisy chain that lay on her sister's lap.

"'Ere it is for 'oo. It's a boofly one!"

"Thank you, baby. Did you make this boofly daisy chain yourself?"

"No; me too little. Bab made it. Se made de little holes wif her nails, 'tause se too lazy to fets a pin." Oliver smiled.

"I like it better than if you had given me a gold chain," he said. "I will always keep it, and remember how lazy Barbara was."

Then turning to the latter: "You are so tired, dear," he continued, as he tenderly folded up the daisy chain, "that I had better go now. I hear Mrs. Merivale

coming, and perhaps it is as well she should not find me here. Good-bye, my love—my only love."

"Good-bye," she said, putting her hand in his and looking him now full in the face. "I can never thank you enough for all your kindness, all your generosity to me; but I do appreciate it, indeed I do. Please, please, don't think me ungrateful. When I remember all you have done for us, for father——"

"Don't say anything about that," he interrupted her; then, as Mrs. Merivale's heavy footfall was heard approaching, he hastily wrung her hand, disappeared through the little door in the wall, and Barbara was left alone with baby.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

BARBARA'S TROUBLES.

VALENTINE RICHMOND was a very fortunate young man—at least, so said his friends. He had no money, and his brains, though good enough to show him which way pointed towards his own interests, were not of the order to enable him to pass examinations, nor, to do him justice, had he ever shown himself specially ambitious so to do. The son of a country clergyman, sent to London, so to speak, to seek his fortune, he had, after two or three unsuccessful attempts at employment, found it in putting out to interest his handsome face, his winning manners, his *dilettante* tastes, which had introduced him into what is called the best society. Here he at once became thoroughly at home, developing a perfect genius for living at other people's expense, in return for which he was always willing to make himself useful or agreeable, to amuse or to be bored, as the case might be. It was his boast that he never took a meal at home—except an occasional breakfast—during the London season, and for the rest of the year there was an unceasing round of country-house life, foreign trips, Cannes, the Riviera, Egypt, always open to a man who was pleasant, agreeable, and good to look at, and who was quite as efficacious and far more diverting than the ordinary courier.

But for the last year or two things had been going badly with him. Several of his patrons and patronesses had dropped off or died; the society which he loved led him into ever-increasing expenses; year by year he became more extravagant, luxurious, and self-indulgent, trying to keep pace with the rich men with whom he associated, and the consequence was debts on all sides. For a time he managed to stave them off; but he could not keep his head above water much longer; the waves were closing fast around him, it behoved him to make a mighty effort, and free himself from them for ever.

The remedy lay ready to his hand. Minnie Denzil was desperately in love with him, as he knew perfectly well, knew that he had only to stretch out his hand to gather the ripe golden fruit that was waiting to drop into his lap; for Minnie had a large fortune of her own, left her by an aunt, and a still larger prospective one from her father. With her money, he need never trouble himself again about expense or debts; besides which, she was handsome in a frigid impassable fashion, an admirable dressing-block, the daughter of Lord Denzil, writing "Honourable" before her name, calm, unimpassioned, uninteresting — the very woman to jog through life with, in serene, well-bred peace, and to be a suitable wife to Valentine Richmond, Esquire, the pet and darling of duchesses and countesses.

Yet, suitable as she was in every way, it required an effort on his part to ask her to become his wife. The truth was, she rather bored him. She was so matter-of-fact, so unimaginative and unresponsive, so absorbed in her *chiffons;* not in a light and airy way, as a woman should be, but looking on them as a solemn duty, on no account to be trifled with. But still, what did it matter? There was the glitter of gold about her, which was much more to the purpose than the glitter of brains. And then, in the midst of his meditations his thoughts would revert to Barbara Merivale, to her bright, clever intelligence, her pretty, fascinating ways and manners, her keen sense of fun, and he would sigh. He had long ago persuaded himself that he had never said one word to her that might not have been published in the *Times*. He had a happy knack of forgetting what it was not convenient to him to remember, but he did not wish to forget Barbara herself, only what he had said to her. He really loved her, as far as such a nature as his could love anyone but himself, and the memory of her sweet face was as a caress to his mind.

"Dear little girl! she was very fond of me," he would think carelessly, wishing that she had had even half Minnie's fortune; he would have sacrificed himself so far to secure so charming a life companion. And now, very soon he would see her again. It was something to look forward to when he went down to Denzilstone at the end of July. It would be drearily dull there with old Lady Denzil and Minnie—Lord Denzil was going to stay with his son in Ireland, after one week at Centrewood, and then on to Scotland; he should get away as much as he could, but Minnie was an exacting *fiancée*, and she must not be thwarted, for she was very generous to him with her money, and required a certain amount of management.

Thus matters stood when, towards the end of July, the whole party emigrated to Denzilstone, Oliver having obtained an unexpected week's holiday, which was very welcome to him. He should see Barbara again, be present probably at her first meeting with Richmond, and be able to take stock of his chances for the future. His spirits rose as he thought of it. He liked an up-hill game, and he certainly had one before him with Barbara, but he would win it in the end, in spite of Richmond—or any other man.

And meanwhile, Barbara was aware that "the family" was returning to Denzilstone, and her heart sank within her at the prospect. Richmond would be with them as Minnie's betrothed. How should she meet him? What would he say to her? She dreaded, and yet longed, to see him, and thinking about him, she forgot Oliver and everyone else. As the time approached for his arrival she became restless and sleepless, and it was a relief to her when she saw the

Denzilstone carriages roll by from the station, and knew for certain that he had come.

But she was mistaken; he had not come. He had sent his luggage, but had deferred his own arrival till a later train, telling Minnie not to send a trap for him, as he liked the walk from the station.

And indeed, after hot dusty London, to stroll through Centrewood, where every house was wreathed with roses and creepers, and where the fresh-scented air was so sweet and pure, was real enjoyment to his beauty-loving nature, true Londoner as he had become.

"How refreshing it is to be alone!" he murmured, as he sauntered through the town; when suddenly turning the corner by the Parrys' house, he became aware of a girl's figure a few yards in front of him.

"It's she!" he exclaimed, under his breath: "the divine Barbara herself!" and forthwith, without any misgivings, hurried his steps to join her.

"Miss Barbara!" he cried; and at the sound of his well-known voice the colour leapt to Barbara's pale cheeks, whilst she mentally resolved how she would meet him. Gathering together all her self-control and summoning her pride, she turned to encounter him with a smiling countenance.

"Mr. Richmond!" she exclaimed. "How you startled me! Why, where have you dropped from?"

"From the station," he answered. "I arrived just now by the 6.10, and I thought I would walk up to the House this lovely evening, little dreaming of the great pleasure in store for me." There was no mistaking the expression of his countenance; there was the old tender look about his mouth, his voice was low and gentle; and Barbara had to fight hard to keep down that tiresome crimson flood that threatened to shipwreck all her assumed indifference.

"Yes," she answered lightly, "it is a sweet evening, isn't it? I suppose London is very hot and stuffy now, and that you are glad to get down to the country?"

"Very glad," he answered earnestly. "All lovely things grow and flourish in the country. I am more than glad to see *you* again."

The old glamour was rapidly stealing over Barbara. With a strong effort she called her injured pride to her rescue, and drew herself a few steps away from him, without answering. She dared not look at him; if she had, she must have betrayed herself.

"Tell me," he continued, more lightly, "what have you all been doing since I saw you last? How is the dear fiddle?"

"There is not much to tell," she answered coldly. "Life at Centrewood is not very varied. I think you know that my father is very ill, and has to keep a curate, who is a very nice man——"

"Happy curate!"

"Why?" The interrogation escaped her involuntarily, and the next moment she had repented it.

"He sees you, enjoys your society every day."

"He has a great deal too much to do to trouble his head about me," she answered haughtily; "to say nothing of being quite taken up with his wife, to whom he has only been married six weeks. I will say good-bye now, Mr. Richmond," she added. "I am going down here to take some work to a poor woman."

"I will walk with you to your destination," he said, "for I have something to say to you. You are angry with me, I can see that from your manner; but if you knew how worried, how miserable I have been —Oh, Barbara, you would not be angry!"

"I am not angry, Mr. Richmond." She was trembling all over, but she spoke quietly. "Good-bye," she added. "I am going in here," pointing to the nearest cottage; then, with a supreme effort, she looked him full in the face. "Please remember me to Miss Denzil," she said, lifted the latch, and entered. Richmond looked after her with a curious expression on his countenance. Her quiet dignity had won his admiration, although it had nettled him very considerably.

"She is lovelier than ever," he said to himself, as he turned slowly away; "but she shall not treat me like that. See if I do not bring her to my feet again." Then, with a sigh, "What an unlucky wretch I am! At any rate, I will enjoy myself whilst I am shut up with all these people at Denzilstone; and I rather fancy I may put a spoke in Master Oliver's wheel when he is once over in the Emerald Isle."

Meanwhile, Barbara was feeling very indignant with her own weakness when she found that she was trembling from head to foot. Thankfully she accepted the chair proffered her by old Mrs. Browne, listening as in a dream to that worthy woman's expressions of delight at seeing her dear Miss Barbara so soon again after her last visit, until, having ascertained through the window that Richmond was well on his road to Denzilstone, she once more sallied nervously forth to go home. She was still mentally tingling all over with the excitement of her encounter. The old love, so vigorously combated through all these weeks, had leapt up into new life at the sight of Richmond, at the tender pleading expression in his countenance, mingled with a fierce indignation against him. How dared he speak to her, look at her, like that—he, an engaged man! And yet the looks, the speech, had burnt themselves into her heart, and kept recurring to her memory. Worried! miserable! If she, Barbara, knew all, she would not be angry with him. What did he mean? Long after dawn she fell asleep with his words on her lips, only to go over in her dreams the whole scene once more. She had forgotten all about Oliver.

The following week saw Denzilstone something like it had been last year. Richmond had no idea of remaining even for a few days mewed up—as he expressed it—with the Denzils, and he had not been six hours in the house before invitations were being issued, friendly and formal gatherings arranged, under cover of which he could flirt with sweet Barbara Merivale to his heart's content. On his side, Mr. Denzil was only too well pleased with his cousin's arrangements. They left him at liberty to prosecute his suit with Barbara in any way he might deem most effective, whilst they would keep Richmond in play at home. The day after his arrival at Denzilstone he betook

himself after lunch—the hour when he knew Barbara was at home—armed with a large supply of chocolate and with two or three new books under his arm, only to find that Mr. Merivale was so unwell that Barbara had given up her lessons and would not leave him that day. Disappointed, he left the chocolate and the books with Charlie, the eldest of the boys, and departed homewards, to cudgel his brains as to how he could contrive to see his divinity as often as possible during his short time at Centrewood.

But the next day Mr. Merivale was much better, and Barbara resumed her duties, still nervous and fluttered by her recollection of her encounter with Richmond, but after the forty-eight hours which had since elapsed, inclined to laugh at, and persuade, herself that she had exaggerated. So, when returning late in the morning from her lessons, she met him in the woods, and was going to pass him with a grave bow, he came up to her with his frankest and sunniest smile, she could not resist him; her heart melted.

"What a grave face, Miss Merivale!" he exclaimed. "I really thought you were going to cut me."

"I am in a hurry," answered Barbara, colouring.

"You are always in a hurry," he said; "and the dog-days are not suitable for hurrying. I will not detain you if I may walk with you a few yards. I have a message for you from Lady Denzil, and I was on my road to the Vicarage to deliver it, but as I have met you, I need not go so far. There is tennis, and tea, up at the House to-morrow, and Lady Denzil wants you to come and bring your fiddle. Will you?" Barbara hesitated. She had so little time to spare, and that little she liked to give to her father; but yet it seemed ill-natured to Lady Denzil to refuse; and besides——

Ah! those delicious summer days at Denzilstone! In spite of herself, the light came into her eyes at the bare thought of them.

"I will come if I can," she said; "but it will only be for about half-an-hour. I have very little time to-morrow." He looked at her with eyes of indignant pity.

"It's a crying shame," he exclaimed, "that you should have to work so hard, and in this weather, too!" She drew herself up a little. If there was one thing she hated more than another, it was pity.

"I like it," she said coldly. "My work has been my best friend."

"Oh yes, I dare say; but you were not intended to work as you do. You are one of those who ought to be clothed in purple and fine linen, and dwell in kings' palaces."

"Indeed!" she said. "Then I certainly fall very short of my destiny. But I don't see that I have any more right to those glories than any other clergyman's daughter, and I certainly don't expect them."

"Because, in your unselfishness, you don't think enough of yourself," he cried; but she cut him short.

"I think quite enough of myself," she answered frigidly. "Will you please tell Lady Denzil that I was so sorry I could not come with mother to-day to call on her, but that I had my lessons to give. Good-bye."

They had reached a point in the woods where two paths diverged, one leading straight into Centrewood, the other to Denzilstone. Richmond had meant to leave her here, not caring to walk through the town with her, but he had not intended to be dismissed.

"You are offended with me again, Barbara," he said, taking her hand and holding it tightly. "Ah, Barbara! I have been weak, foolish, but I have always loved you—yes, loved you to distraction. If you only knew all I have gone through, all I have suffered——" But here Barbara, who had at first remained spellbound, violently withdrew her hand.

"Mr. Richmond, how can you, how dare you, speak to me like that?" she panted. "How dare you," she reiterated, "when you are engaged to be married?" She was drawn up to more than her full height, her eyes were sparkling with anger and excitement, a spot of colour burnt on each cheek; she looked beautiful.

Richmond stood coolly smiling at her indignation, with insolent admiration in his eyes. "Those are not pretty words, Miss Barbara," he said.

"No, perhaps they are not," she answered. "How can you expect pretty words: you, who have only been engaged to be married six weeks?"

He did lower his eyes a little this time, and a cold shudder ran through him as he thought of Minnie—and her money. He had no intention of endangering that precious commodity.

"Go, and leave me," she continued, and he turned at once. A sound of voices had reached his ears; suppose that Minnie were anywhere in the vicinity?

Left to herself, Barbara watched him out of sight, the wrath blazing in her eyes until she could see no more of him. Then she sank down at the foot of a tree, and buried her face in her hands. "Oh, it is cruel! it is cruel!" she moaned, "to say such things to me—to tell me he loves me when he knows he is going to marry someone else. Poor Minnie! And yet, perhaps, it is all her fault. He said he had gone through so much. I wonder what it was? Oh, if I had never, never seen him again!"

How long she stayed there she did not know. It might have been five minutes, it might have been thirty. She tried to get up and walk home, but felt so dizzy she had to give up the attempt, and sit down again and rest her head against the tree.

Richmond had spoken truly in one respect. She did work too hard for her refined delicate organisation. The hot weather, the walks in the sun, the weary round of lessons, the early rising to practise her violin, the impossibility of rest at home, all these, combined with parish work, might have told on a stouter frame than hers; but when, in addition, she had to contend with Richmond's faithlessness, with the anxiety about her father, with sleepless nights, and days whence all the brightness had fled, it was no wonder that her strength gave way.

Thus it was that Oliver found her a quarter of an hour later, with a face like marble, insensible under the old beech-tree. At first, so white and still did she look that a horrible fear fell upon him that she might be dead; until, kneeling by her side, and calling her

name softly, "Barbara," she opened her eyes, gazing at him with dazed, frightened looks. Then as it stole over her that it was Oliver, not Richmond, she tried to smile, but it was somewhat of a failure.

"Are you faint, dear?" he asked, too alarmed to weigh his words.

"I think so," she answered in a feeble voice; "it is the heat." Then suddenly struggling to rise to her feet, "I think I can walk home now," she said.

"Then I am sure you can't," he answered gently, but authoritatively. "You must not think of such a thing. I will fetch a carriage for you."

"You couldn't get a carriage into this narrow path," she replied; "I am certain I can walk." Oliver felt rather at his wits' ends; he did not carry restoratives about his person, and what she said about the carriage was quite true. If he could get her a few hundred yards further, out into the green ride that opened into Centrewood, she could then be driven home.

"Take my arm then, dear, and see," he answered. She took his arm quite naturally, surprised in a kind of hazy way to find herself doing so, and began to try and walk. It was not a very successful performance. Her legs seemed to give way under her, and she staggered so that Oliver had to put his arm round her waist to steady her—one of the most blissful moments of his life.

"You must sit down again," he said most disinterestedly, for he would have liked to support her for hours, "and I will fetch you some restorative." But she shook her head.

"I will go on," she said resolutely. "It is only a few yards, and I want to get home to father." He let her have her own way; and, with his supporting arm and the force of her own will, she managed somehow to get as far as the grass ride, where he placed her under a tree, and for a second sat down beside her.

"What was it, dear, upset you?" he asked.

Poor Barbara! Was she never to be quit of this unwelcome love-making, these tender addresses? Was there a conspiracy afloat, that they should all take to making love to her in this dreadful way? She edged away from Oliver and tried to get up. He saw that he had made a mistake.

"Forgive me," he said earnestly, "and sit down. I forgot myself; I won't do it again. I will go at once and get a carriage for you, whilst you stay here"; and he rose to depart.

She watched him out of sight with a sigh of relief, then closing her eyes again, and leaning her head against the trunk of the tree, she once more fell into a comatose state, from which she was roused by his return, accompanied by Mary Thornton.

"My poor Bab!" cried the latter, her good-tempered common-sensical face full of commiseration as she jumped from her pony-cart. "So you have succumbed at last! Poor dear! Drink some of this"—holding a glass to her lips—"and then Mr. Denzil will help you into the trap. What was it put the finishing straw to you?" as Barbara did as she was told.

"The heat, I think," she answered. "I had been walking in the sun, and—and—I was very tired."

"Of course you were. You ought to give up your lessons in this tropical weather. But I won't scold you. Do you feel better? yes, I am sure you do. Look, Mr. Denzil: is she not getting positively pink?" Indeed, the restorative had taken effect, and once

"BABY CAME TODDLING UP TO OLIVER" (*p.* 613).

more the warm blood was coursing through her veins.

"Oh, I am very much better," she cried; it was such a comfort to have Mary with her. "I feel a different person. Will you take me home now, Mary dear?"

"Yes; for the sooner you get there the better. Now then"—giving her her hand—"Mr. Denzil, will you take the other? There you are, Bab, triumphantly on your feet. We will have you home in no time."

"How did you know about me?" asked Barbara, as she walked to the pony-cart.

"I met Mr. Denzil at the gate, and he asked me to come and drive you home, which, of course, I was only too glad to do," answered Mary.

"Mr. Denzil has been so kind," said Barbara, raising her eyes to his face, and then suddenly crimsoning. "I'll get in, Mary," she said hastily.

This was accomplished without any difficulty, for the pony cart was a low one, and very soon the two girls were driving off, leaving Oliver standing in the green glade, gazing after them with troubled eyes.

"I've not made any progress," he murmured to himself. "I almost think she dislikes me. I was a fool to-day. Why could not I control my tongue?"

Half-an-hour later, and he was at the Vicarage to inquire after her. Stolid Jane, who opened the door to him, could give him very little information about her. She believed Miss Barbara was quite well; yes, Miss Thornton had driven her home, and gone up to her bedroom with her, and so on, until suddenly darting past Jane came Charlie, evidently in hot haste. Oliver caught him by the arm.

"How is your sister, Charlie?"

"Bab? Oh, she's all right. She's in her room, but there's not much the matter with her, mother says. She's not in bed, you see. Let me go, Mr. Denzil; I am off for Dr. Prince. Father's bad again," and before Oliver could ask him any questions the boy was half way up the street, running as hard as he could, leaving Mr. Denzil confronted with worthy, but stupid, Jane.

"What is it with Mr. Merivale?" he asked.

"I think, sir, as 'ow he must 'ave had another stroke; leastways——" but at this point in her conjectures Mrs. Merivale was heard calling her, and she promptly disappeared.

Oliver waited for a minute, in the hopes of her return, and then reflecting that he was probably only in the way, he walked home to impart the sad intelligence at Denzilstone.

He found his family at luncheon with two or three people from the neighbourhood, Richmond the life and soul of the party.

"Why, Oliver, how doleful you look!" he cried as Denzil entered the room. "What's the matter? Have your constituents been troublesome?"

Oliver was not conscious that he looked doleful, although he felt so.

"Do I?" he asked. "I have just heard rather bad news. Mr. Merivale has had another stroke."

Richmond changed colour. For one second his guilty conscience connected Mr. Merivale's stroke with his late interview with Barbara, the next moment he had reflected that it was not likely.

"Well, poor man! His life must be a burden to him," he said carelessly. "I suppose this will kill him."

For a few minutes the conversation buzzed round the Merivales and their affairs, the guests wondering what would become of them. Would Miss Merivale come out as a professional? she really played the violin exceedingly well. What a pretty girl she was! rather a flirt though, so people said, but so superior in every way to her stepmother, and so on. Oliver did not think it necessary to mention his meeting with Barbara. He listened to all the talk, without taking much part in it, and an hour or two later was down at the Vicarage again. As he approached the house he perceived that the blinds were all drawn down. Mr. Merivale was dead then—at rest, after all his sufferings. For him Oliver felt he could only rejoice, but his heart bled for Barbara. She and her father had been so bound up in one another, what would she do now? He longed to know how she was, yet had no wish to intrude at such a moment. At last his solicitude won the day, and he rang the bell. Jane opened the door, with red nose and swollen eyes, but with a certain accession of dignity and importance of manner, due to the fact of death in the house.

"How is Miss Merivale?" he asked.

The girl looked at him with wondering and rebuking eyes, which recalled him to a sense of his duty.

"And Mrs. Merivale?" he added, somewhat lamely.

"They're as well as can be expected, sir," responded Jane, uttering the conventional sentence with a certain satisfaction that she had said the right thing, yet burning to impart more definite information.

"And Miss Merivale has quite recovered her fainting attack?" he queried.

"Oh yes, sir: leastways she was with the Vicar at the last, and——"

But Oliver had no mind for details from Jane.

"Thank you," he interrupted her. "I will not wait now. Will you give Mrs. Merivale this card?" and handing her one of his cards, on which he had hastily written, "Can I be of any use to you? If so, I shall be only too glad," he walked away sadly. No chance of his seeing Barbara now for many days to come, and next week he was due in Ireland.

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

THE FIRST DAY DOWNSTAIRS.

Two months had elapsed since Mr. Merivale's death, and the event had passed into ancient history. Mrs. Merivale had not had much time to grieve; hardly had her husband been laid in his grave before she had had to turn her attention to Barbara. The girl had broken down after the funeral. It had proved the proverbial last straw, and the illness that had been gathering for weeks had come on with such irresistible force as to compel her to take to her bed.

Mrs. Merivale had nursed her tenderly and carefully. In her own way she had grown fond of her step-

daughter, recognising with a humility that was really pathetic that she belonged to another world than her own, that the Greys had been very different people in every way from the Woods, and that if ever she did become Mrs. Denzil—a consummation most devoutly to be wished—she would be quite equal to the position.

Besides, as matters now stood, Barbara was a most important personage. She was the owner of her own mother's small fortune, which was nearly all the family had to subsist on. She might choose to take herself and her fortune away, and leave her stepmother and half-brothers to shift for themselves; and at this thought Mrs. Merivale's heart would stand still, the memory of all the sharp, spiteful words she had said to Barbara would recur to her mind, and the tears would trickle down her cheeks, as she sat by the bedside, and wondered whether the girl would now have her revenge. In her heart she knew her to be incapable of such a thing—knew that, for all her bursts of anger, she was generous, warm-hearted, true; but there was a certain dismal pleasure in tormenting herself with these prognostications, to say nothing of her nerves being unhinged, which made her magnify into enormous proportions every unkind word she had ever said to Barbara, until she felt convinced that her stepdaughter must resent them.

And meanwhile, she nursed her with unflagging devotion, sustained by a little note that bore the postmark "Dublin," that had lain in her pocket through all these weary weeks, and acted as a talisman. It was a very commonplace little note, but to Mrs. Merivale it was written in letters of gold. It ran as follows:

"MY DEAR MRS. MERIVALE,—I was much concerned to hear from my mother this morning that Miss Merivale had quite broken down after her great grief, and was now laid up. I trust she is not very seriously ill, and that you have not that trouble in addition to your own sorrow. If you have a moment to spare, I shall be glad to hear how she is: in fact, how you all are.

"Believe me, yours very truly,
"OLIVER DENZIL."

Was not this note a most marked thing? Could he not have heard from his mother or sister, or his friend Mr. Bramley, how Barbara was going on? But no; he must hear from the fountain-head itself, and hear he should. Mrs. Merivale had written him three sheets in response, giving a hopeful report of her stepdaughter and an account of her own plans, as far as they were made—a letter that made Oliver smile by its fervour of gratitude for all the good things showered on the invalid from Denzilstone, but filled him too with joy, for his Barbara was better, would get well, to be the delight and happiness of his life. And meanwhile, over two months had slipped away, and Mrs. Merivale's and Dr. Prince's care, the game, the fruit, and other good things from Denzilstone, had done their work, and Barbara was once more in the drawing-room, pale, large-eyed, languid, but yet able to walk downstairs, and to undertake the care of baby whilst her stepmother went out on very necessary business.

The house was hushed and quiet, the boys were all out; she, Jane, and baby were alone in it—alone with the sun that came pouring in at the open window, and the flowers with which every vase was filled, and that all came from the Denzilstone gardens. Barbara sat in a large arm-chair in the little bow window that looked on to the garden, whilst at her feet baby played contentedly with her bricks, cooing out little stories to herself, and jumping up every now and then on her little fat feet, to show her sister something or to ask her some question.

The room was so still that you could count the beats of the clock, as it ticked away on the mantelpiece, and Barbara had fallen into a reverie. There was plenty for her to think of in the future, poor child, but she did not feel up to that at present. She was thinking of the past, of that dreadful day when Richmond had met her in the woods, and told her he had always loved her—thinking of the indignant words she had spoken, when all the time her heart had gone out to him—thinking of how Oliver had found her, and of that terrible home-coming to her dying father. That day had been her nightmare all through her illness, and it was with her still. It was always repeating itself in her tired brain, until it was almost a relief to look into the dreary future, and to picture her life without her father, a weary round of petty narrowing cares, of striving to make both ends meet. And then, somehow, her thoughts would revert to Oliver and his words under the cedar-tree, whose branches she could see from where she sat.

"He did not mean them," she thought to herself. "No doubt he has repented of them long ago; I hope he has:" which was not absolutely true. She would hardly have been a woman if she had felt really and truly glad that Oliver's love should be withdrawn from her, even though she could not return it.

"What was it he said?" she thought wearily to herself. "'If at any time you can say or write to me, "Oliver, I love you," you will find me ready and waiting'—I will not marry him unless I can really and truly say that from my heart, and therefore I shall never marry him, for I shall never be able to say it. Oh, baby, how you startled me!" for baby had suddenly crept from under the table, and was peering up into her sister's face.

"I fought 'oo was asleep, Bab," she said, "and me been welly twiet."

"So you have, my darling. Bab has been a very naughty sister, hasn't she? and not taken any notice of poor baby for ever so long; but now she's not going to be lazy any longer."

"'Ook," said baby, perched on the arm of her sister's chair, from whence she commanded a fine view of the prospect beyond the garden, "'ook, Bab, dere goes Mitter Ritsmon; he's dot Bogey wif him."

"Has he?" said Barbara, involuntarily directing her eyes to the lane that ran along by the side of the Vicarage into the fields at the back, and then the colour flamed up into her pale face as she caught sight of Richmond sauntering along the lane, his dog Bogey by his side. He was looking up at the window, and when he saw her—for she had leaned forward in her chair without thinking of what she was doing—he lifted his deerstalker from his head and bowed low.

"OLIVER FOUND HER . . . . INSENSIBLE UNDER THE OLD BEECH-TREE" (*p.* 616).

Barbara shrank back into her corner as though she had been struck, sick at heart; the gesture had been so impertinently suggestive of admiration.

"Dack and I met Mitter Ritsmon dis mornin'," prattled baby. "He took uth to Mitter Brown, and dave uth suth a lot of coclate, and he thaid 'How ith pitty thithter Barbara?' And Dack thaid, 'The's muth better; the's doing to the drawing-room'; and he thaid 'Ith the? Div her my love.'"

"No, baby; he did not say that?"

"Yeth he did; but Dack fordot it."

"Never mind, darling; it's all right," said Barbara; and then she sank back in her chair; how tired she was!

"I thought Mr. Richmond was in Scotland," she continued meditatively, after a pause.

"Me not know," said baby. "He dave me coclate dis morning"; after which she dived down under the table and re-commenced building.

Barbara remained leaning back in her chair, indignation struggling for the mastery with that horrid fascination that Richmond exercised upon her, wondering when he had returned to Denzilstone; fighting—oh! so hard—not to feel glad that he had returned.

Wearied out, she was just getting up to fetch a book to divert her thoughts, when the door suddenly opened, and before she had time to remonstrate with her, Jane had announced Mr. Denzil, and he was in the room.

Barbara started, turning even whiter than she had been before. This was indeed a day of surprises, for if she had imagined Richmond to be in Scotland, she had equally fancied that Oliver was in Ireland.

"I am afraid I have taken you by surprise and startled you," he said, taking her thin hand in his, and holding it longer than was necessary. "I'm so sorry. I ought to apologise for intruding on you at all," he continued; "but when your servant said you were in the drawing-room, I could not help begging to see you on a little matter of business: nothing to worry you, I assure you. You are better, I hope?"

"Oh yes, very much better, quite convalescent," nervously. "Baby, come, darling, and say 'How d'ye do?' to Mr. Denzil. Never mind your building." What a merciful thing it was that baby was here!

But that young person had no ambition to fill the post of chaperon. She was very fond of Mr. Denzil, who was a more reliable and magnificent bestower of chocolate and dainties than Richmond; but just at this moment she had a building on hand that required great nicety of execution.

"Me tum thoon, Mitter Denil," she said. "Me welly buthy now."

"All right, baby," said Oliver; "don't hurry yourself. We shall be able to talk all the better," turning to Barbara, who acquiesced with a sinking heart. It was very nearly half-past four in the afternoon. Could she do otherwise than offer him tea? The instincts of hospitality were strong within her; she could hardly have refrained from offering her greatest enemy tea when it was verging on 4.30; how much more this man, her father's kindest friend.

"You will have some tea, Mr. Denzil, won't you?" she asked.

"With much pleasure, if you are sure it won't tire you too much," he answered.

"Tea, please, Jane," she said, and with the words felt that her fate was sealed. There was no escape now.

There was a pause for a second, during which they were both thinking what to say—it was the first time they had met since Mr. Merivale's death—and then Barbara broke it with the original remark—

"What a beautiful day, isn't it?"

"Yes, a very nice one for your first appearance downstairs. It is your first appearance, isn't it?"

"My very first; yes."

"And you have been upstairs actually eight weeks!" How pat he had got every detail, she thought.

"Yes; wasn't it disgraceful of me?" she said, with a shadow of her old smile. "But it was Dr. Prince who kept me upstairs for precaution. I have been convalescent a long time. And oh, Mr. Denzil, how good and kind they have been to me at Denzilstone! I ought to have got well long ago from all the nice things they sent me; but I fear I was horribly ungrateful, I could eat so little of them. And then," shyly, "the books, I know you sent those; it was so very kind of you. I do like them immensely. I have not read them all yet, and now I am better I enjoy them so much."

He smiled. "I am afraid I am a person of one idea," he said, "and that idea is that books are a panacea for a good many woes. When I want to give anyone a present, I can never think of anything else; consequently, I have to depute Minnie to buy my wedding presents, or I should infallibly give my friends books all the way round."

"And a very nice present, too."

"Minnie does not think so. She says they are not at all the right thing, so now I hand the business over to her. She thoroughly enjoys it, and I pay the bills, which is a very good arrangement for us both. But to think of your having been ill for eight weeks! You look like a ghost still, poor child! You were thoroughly ill that day that I found you in the woods."

Barbara shuddered. "That horrid, horrid day!" she said.

He, thinking she was alluding to her father's death, said nothing, and a silence ensued, broken at last by him.

"Am I tiring you?" he asked. But she shook her head.

"No," she said, "indeed you are not." In truth, she was surprised to find that she did not at all mind his presence; no doubt it was because he was talking sensibly, as she expressed it, and not making love to her; anyhow, he certainly was not tiring her.

"Because if I am not," he continued, "I should like to explain to you why I came here to-day. My mother tells me you are looking out for a house in this neighbourhood, and that hitherto Mrs. Merivale has not been able to find one."

"No, she has seen nothing to suit us."

"Are you sure this topic does not worry you?"

"Quite sure," with a sad little smile. "Poor mother talks of nothing else. She is gone to look at two or three houses this afternoon with Miss Sanderson, but I am quite sure they will not do."

"No, they never do. I have a friend who looked for a house for ten years. At last, after going over two hundred, he took the first one he had seen, having wasted ten years. But to go back to your affairs. . . . Why, here is Mrs. Merivale, arrived just in time to hear what I have got to say, and to relieve you from the cares of tea-making," as Mrs. Merivale entered the room, followed by Jane with the tea-tray.

The poor woman had lost a good deal of her energy, and did not move quite as briskly as formerly. Her husband's death, followed by Barbara's illness, had told considerably upon her, and she came into the room looking tired and dispirited. But when she saw Mr. Denzil sitting there *tête-à-tête* with Barbara, with only baby as chaperon, her face brightened, and she drew a deep sigh of relief. Apart from every other consideration, she had long since learnt to look upon Oliver as the guardian angel of the family, and the very sight of his face was a pleasure to her.

"Oh, Mr. Denzil!" she cried. "I never thought to find you here. It is quite a treat to see you. When did you come?"

"This afternoon," he answered.

"And you came here straight from the station?" she asked—a fact which had not impressed itself on Barbara's mind, but which her astute stepmother immediately discovered.

"Yes; because I wanted to talk a little business with you. But as you were out, Miss Barbara kindly asked me to stay for tea, and I am afraid I have tired her out."

"May I ask what the business is you want to talk over with me?" she inquired rather abruptly, on thorns to know what it was.

"Certainly. I hear you are looking out for a house in this neighbourhood, and I want to secure you as my tenant."

"Your tenant?"

"Yes. You know my father has made me the handsome present of all the public-houses on his property down here. It is indeed a handsome present, for as you know, they are very numerous. With a view to decreasing their number, I propose when the leases of the present tenants expire to turn a certain number of them to other purposes, and I mean to begin with the 'Raven' at Ditchworth. You remember it, don't you, the other side of the park?"

"Quite well," said Barbara. "It is a lovely old house."

"Over two hundred years old, and very picturesque, with a charming old-fashioned garden and small bowling-green—much too nice for a very low public-house, as it is at present: the fifth, by the way, in a population of seven hundred. Well, the long and the short of it is that the last tenant's lease expired on Midsummer Day, and I am now going to turn it into a small gentleman's cottage, and I want you, Mrs. Merivale, to be my first tenant when it is finished. I shall have to add to and alter it considerably to make it habitable, but it will always be a bad house—low, small rooms, and so on—so I ask a low rent."

"What do you call a low rent?" inquired Mrs. Merivale.

"Twenty-five pounds a year."

Mrs. Merivale gasped. The rents asked about Centrewood were enormous.

"Only twenty-five pounds a year?" she exclaimed.

"Yes; it's not worth a cent more. Will you let me drive you over there to-morrow morning, and show you what alterations I propose to make, and then you can see how you like it."

Poor Mrs. Merivale! Her broad common face expanded under her widow's cap, until for the moment it almost looked comely. At that minute she could have embraced Mr. Denzil with pleasure, had such a proceeding been permissible.

"Come? of course I will, Mr. Denzil. I think the place will suit us exactly; don't you, Barbara? There is a most productive kitchen garden, I know, for I have often bought potatoes from Higgins when he was there. You see, we must stay near Centrewood, because of Barbara's pupils." Here Mrs. Merivale paused to see what Mr. Denzil would say. To her disappointment, he made a gesture of acquiescence. "And therefore, Ditchworth is the very place for us," she continued: "close to the station which brings her within reach of everybody. And then the church and parish are so nice. My poor dear husband"—Barbara winced—"was so fond of Mr. Charlton; and Mrs. Charlton is a nice little woman, not quite my idea of a clergyman's wife; but you cannot have perfection. How many bedrooms are there, Mr. Denzil?"

Oliver went into the matter with all due solemnity, the result being that he undertook to call for Mrs. Merivale the next day at eleven o'clock.

"I wish you could come," he said, turning to Barbara, who was lying back in her chair, white and listless. "Do you like the idea of the 'Raven?'"

"Yes," she answered, trying to look interested.

"Only that you hate the thought of any place just now; of course you do. I quite understand."

"You always do understand," she said, flushing a little. "Yes, that's it, I hate the thought of any place now. You know I am not ungrateful. I see how kind you are, and I am sure it is just the place for us, but—anyhow, I am afraid I could not go to-morrow."

"No, you ought not to," he answered; "besides, there is no hurry. Some day, when you are more up to it, my mother shall drive you over, and meanwhile I will send you the plan of the house and grounds, and the proposed alterations, to study at your leisure."

"Oh, thank you! I shall like that. I am very fond of plans," and she smiled more cheerfully than she had throughout the afternoon. And then, at last, Mr. Denzil rose to go.

"I really must be off and put in an appearance at home," he said, "or I do not know what they will say."

"Indeed you must!" cried Mrs. Merivale, elated and triumphant, "or Lady Denzil will never forgive us. How long do you stay?"

"I go back to-morrow night."

"How I do pity all you English in Ireland," she said. "You seem to me to live in a steamer. How do you like Ireland now?"

"I like my work—or rather I am immensely interested in it. I always do enjoy an up-hill game."

"Oh, by the way, I met Mr. Richmond just now; I was so surprised. I thought that both he and your sister were in Scotland."

"They returned yesterday, or the day before, I think. Now I must really say good-bye, Mrs. Merivale." Then turning to Barbara:

"Good-bye, Miss Barbara," he said, taking her hand and holding it; then, as Mrs. Merivale became conveniently absorbed in something going on in the garden, "Get well soon," he added, in a lower tone, "for everyone's sake." The next moment the door had closed behind him, and Mrs. Merivale, forgetting all her prudence, had turned to her daughter, her face beaming with curiosity.

"Well, Barbara?" she cried.

"I think the 'Raven' will make us a dear little house, mother," answered Barbara.

"The 'Raven!' Who is talking about the 'Raven?' As though you would ever live in it!"

"What!" cried Barbara, with a spice of malice. "Don't you intend me to live with you, mother? Are you going to shunt me?"

"No, no, my dear. You know perfectly well what I mean. By the time we go to the 'Raven' you will be—oh, Barbara, how pleased your poor father would have been!" Barbara turned paler than before, and then coloured up to her eyes.

"You are all wrong, mother," she said. "Please put such ideas out of your head, and say nothing more about them. I think, if you don't mind, I'll go upstairs now and lie down. I feel so stupidly tired."

Mrs. Merivale was all attention at once. "Certainly, my dear," she said. "You have had a tiring day, for your first downstairs. Come, take my arm; you do look very done up. However, a good night's rest will soon put you straight."

"Oh yes!" said Barbara, thankful to find herself in her bedroom. "Now, mother, I must not keep you. Oh, I do hope I shall soon be well enough to help you, with all you have to do. At any rate, I can take care of baby. Please send her to me."

"Don't you worry yourself about me," cried Mrs.

Merivale warmly. "Get quite well yourself, and try to go to sleep now, for I must run off. I shall have Mrs. Bramley here directly; she is coming for me to give her all the quantities for the treat"; and off bustled Mrs. Merivale, much to her daughter's relief. Go to sleep! No, she could not do that. After her more than two months' seclusion the afternoon had been an exciting one to her. The mere sight of Richmond had set all her pulses galloping, and Oliver's presence and the dread of what he might say had not tended to quiet them. How good, how thoughtful he was! How cleverly he had pitched the rent of the "Raven," so as not to offend their susceptibilities, and yet to bring it so thoroughly within the compass of their means. What a perfect gentleman he was! And yet, nice as he was, clever as he undoubtedly was, she could not bring herself to contemplate—— At this moment there came sounding through the open window the notes of a man's whistle, sweet as any flute's. Barbara knew it well; would have recognised it anywhere; how often she had accompanied it on her violin. "Meet me once again." It smote upon her ear, filling her with a transport of anger and longing; anger that he, an engaged man, engaged to Minnie Denzil, should so dare to whistle under her window; longing to see him, to speak to him. She might have done the former by walking across the room to the window, but such an idea never entered her head. Instead of which, she lay perfectly still on her bed, listening to every note, seeing, hearing only him, absolutely oblivious of the existence even of such a person as Oliver Denzil. Her meditations were interrupted by a knock at the door and baby's impatient little voice.

"Let me in, Bab. Me bought 'oo somefing." She opened the door, and there stood baby, her little hands full of beautiful flowers.

"Mitter Denil 'ent 'oo dese, Bab," she said. "Dood Mitter Denil. Do 'oo lub him?"

"No," cried Barbara, very decidedly.

"Den 'oo welly naughty," returned baby, equally decidedly. "He dives 'oo flowers and me coolly. I lub him. Dere's Mitter Ritsmon; I hear him."

"Never mind him, baby. Come and help me arrange these beautiful flowers."

"No," said baby, about to rush to the window and poke her curly head out to greet Mitter Ritsmon; but by an adroit movement Barbara intercepted her.

"Baby, you are not to go to the window," she said. "I mean it. You must stay at this end of the room with me. See, darling, here's a lovely flower for you. Let me put it into your dress."

Baby looked crestfallen for a moment, for when Barbara spoke like that she knew she must obey. "I wanted to 'ee Mitter Ritsmon," she said dolefully.

"Oh, nonsense! You saw him this morning. You had much better help me. See what a quantity I have to arrange. I could not do them without you."

"Bab," suddenly, "whits do 'oo lub betht? Mitter Ritsmon or Mitter Denil?" But Barbara was apparently so absorbed in her flowers that she did not hear this searching question. At any rate, she did not answer it.

"I tink I lub Mitter Denil betht," continued baby. "Dack doeth."

"Why?" asked Barbara.

"'Tause," said baby, opening her blue eyes wide and speaking in a most fascinating whisper, "he always dives uth cocly and all thorths of dood fings, and Mitter Ritsmon only thometimes."

"Oh, you horrid, greedy little thing!" cried Barbara. "I'm ashamed of you, my babs!"

"No, 'oo's not," said baby, "'oo's not shamed of me; 'oo lubs me."

"Yes, my pretty, I do; but I don't want you to be a nasty greedy little girl."

"I'se not nathty and dreedy, but I lub cocly. Mover thayth all little dals do."

"Of course they do, pet. There now, I have finished the flowers, so give me a kiss, and we'll cuddle up together and try to go to sleep, shall we?"

END OF CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

THE YEAR'S JEWELS.

BY M. C. GILLINGTON.

CHRYSOLITE: SEPTEMBER.

Preserves from despair.

THE sunflower's face
Peered o'er the garden wall,—
So calm a place
For sunflowers and long rays to dwell within,
Where peaches mellow, and red mulberries fall,
And crickets chirp, and gossamer spiders spin.

As some bright stone
Shines in a sombre place,
A hope unknown.
A healing hope, glowed through the garden shade,
Unto the maiden, from the sunflower's face,
And in her heart a happy shining made.

She raised her lips,
And kissed its golden head,
As a bee sips
Honey at morning-time; the sunflower's face
Beamed sun-like, gold ray-petals wide outspread,
And smiled like hope itself in her embrace.

Words by SHELLEY. *Music by* F. W. AUSTIN.

VOICE.

PIANO.

p

A

Dolente.

pp

wi - dow bird sate mourn - ing for her love, Up - on a win - try

bough ;..... The fro - zen wind crept

cres.

on..... a - bove, The freez - ing stream be - low.....

crescendo.

mf *f*

There was no leaf up - on the for-est bare, No flowr

mf *f*

p *pp molto rall.*

up-on the ground, And lit - tle mo - tion in the air, Except the mill - wheel's

p *rall.*

a tempo.

sound.

a tempo.

ppp

WHY SOME PEOPLE ARE BASHFUL.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.

"I hate bashful men."—COWPER, 1781.

ASHFULNESS is defined as want of self-possession or as excessive self-consciousness, and those who suffer from it are embarrassed and ill at ease in society. The late Wilkie Collins tells a tale of a bashful man who applied for advice to a modern editor, and received the following reply: "When you have a sad trick of blushing on being introduced to a young lady, and when you want to correct the habit, summon to your aid a manly confidence." At first sight we smile at this answer and think there is a jest hidden somewhere, but there is really a basis of sound sense in the apparently absurd advice. This is recognised when the causes of bashfulness, together with its accompaniments, blushing, stammering, etc., are investigated with the help of medical knowledge.

Bashfulness is what is known medically as a *functional* disorder: that is to say, it does not depend upon any actual disease, but is due to some temporary interference with the natural action of the brain. When the natural action of the brain is thus interfered with, we say it is *inhibited.* The meaning of this word becomes clearer when one or two examples of inhibition are examined. We are able to stop a yawn or a violent sneeze by a resolute effort of the will. In these cases the brain-impulses which were about to produce those violent movements, receive a message from the part of the brain which is occupied with thinking, and so the movements are stopped, or inhibited. We cannot prevent every movement in such a manner. Thus, we cannot by any effort of the will stop (or inhibit) the beat of the heart for a single moment, but we can stop, at all events for a little time, the movements of the chest and other parts of the body which constitute breathing. In like manner, all those natural actions of the brain which are manifested in easy, unconstrained behaviour are *inhibited* in the disorder called bashfulness. It is really the messages sent by the higher or thinking part of the brain which are the actual cause of our embarrassment. This being the case, since we can control our thoughts to a considerable extent, it is in our own power to some degree to prevent the "inhibiting" action of the brain, and we shall find later that it is by cultivating "a manly confidence" that the cure of bashfulness is accomplished. The conduct of a bashful man shows clearly that the ordinary action of the brain is suspended as we have described. For example, one of the commonest symptoms is stammering. Here the orderly brain messages which cause the tongue, lips, and other parts concerned in speaking to move properly are inhibited, and so there is produced the confused and halting speech known as stammering. His power of orderly movement, of judging distance, is also inhibited. He stumbles over furniture, he drops things from his hands, and exhibits all those painful embarrassments with which we are all familiar.

The first chief cause of bashfulness consists in a man's attention being directed to himself. The man who is quite at ease in his office—bashfulness is most often an attribute of the male sex—becomes self-conscious in the drawing-room, and very shy. Although capable of joining in the conversation, his witty remark is forestalled because he is too slow in giving utterance to it, or too timid to hear his own voice. The ordinary action of his brain is inhibited by his self-consciousness. The second cause is emotion. The extreme bashfulness of many men when they are in love is proverbial, and the surprisingly few married men who suffer from bashfulness is noteworthy.

These causes are, however, usually insufficient to produce bashfulness, but there must be some further necessary condition. Many conditions pre-dispose to it: *e.g.*, a highly nervous temperament, deficient moral courage, with which is associated lack of self-assertion. These may be regarded as constitutional causes.

Another pre-disposing cause is defective education. The general education may have been neglected, or the want of opportunities of acquiring self-confidence in society may have been experienced. Bashfulness is natural to youth. "Modesty is the graceful, calm virtue of maturity; bashfulness the charm of vivacious youth"; and unless a young man takes advantage of opportunities of entering society, he will retain "an air of bashfulness which is in reality the want of habitual intercourse with the world" (Waverley). As long ago as 1570 Ascham wrote that "if a young gentleman be bashfull and soon blush, they call him a babishe and ill brought up thyng." Deficient social education is therefore a cause of bashfulness.

Habit also pre-disposes to it. A mere indisposition to exert oneself, if indulged for too long a time, may eventually result in confirmed bashfulness. This indifference may be due to a want of sympathy with the surroundings, or may have its origin in unalloyed selfishness—for many bashful men are extremely selfish—or may be due to vanity.

The man who is the life of the tap-room, because there he can do no wrong, is painfully ill at ease in the society of his equals; and the behaviour of Hastings, in "She Stoops to Conquer," is an example of this. Lastly, excessive smoking or excessive drinking, and immoral or unhealthy pursuits of all kinds, are sometimes the cause of bashfulness.

The pre-disposing causes of bashfulness may therefore practically be included in one comprehensive

term—defective education. The education is defective morally, intellectually, and socially. How very important is the intellectual aspect will be more apparent as the effective treatment of bashfulness is discussed. If the constitutional causes are in any way associated with ill-health, the family doctor must be consulted. With this exception, the cure depends entirely upon the ability of the man himself, by steady perseverance and well-directed effort to correct the moral and intellectual failings from which he suffers. It is certain that success can eventually be attained.

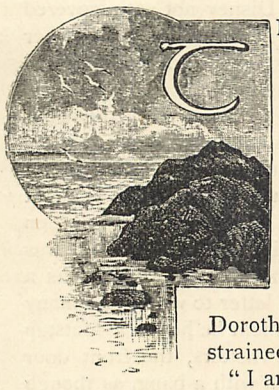
The elements of social education are best acquired in the family circle. There a man learns to take an intelligent and sympathetic interest in others, to be gentle and courteous, and to be forgetful of self. If he fails there, what hope is there for him in the company of strangers? The deep, lasting, and moulding influence of home life cannot be exaggerated. "No man doth safely appear abroad but he who can abide at home," says Thomas à Kempis. Bashful men often lead double lives; and it is certain that the artificial and unusual restraint which oppresses them in society is not unfrequently due to the neglect of social amenities at home. Such a man has only the veneer of a gentleman. The bashful man must finally take full advantage of opportunities of appearing in society. At first he must content himself with a retiring and subordinate position. His social ambition will grow with his social success, and will be gratified eventually in full. If he be gifted with some accomplishment, his career will be the more speedy and brilliant. If, on the other hand, he has no "accomplishment," he will be greatly assisted by giving some thought beforehand to subjects of conversation. Few men are able to dissociate themselves without effort from their business or their own interests. Many people hide successfully their bashfulness under a cloak of reserve. If this is overcome, they add materially to the enjoyment of a company; while unconquered, it aggravates the bashfulness of others.

One note of warning, in conclusion: it is better to be shy and retiring than forward and pretentious. In avoiding one extreme, many rush to their own destruction in the other. A man entering society is like unto a man entering the sea to learn to swim. At first he must play in shallow water, but as he acquires confidence after many failures, he ventures further from the shore. The foundation of true social success is laid at home, but its complete realisation depends upon habitual social intercourse.

A DESPERATE VENTURE.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART II.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.



THE storm that Anthony predicted broke in full force the morning of the next day. Mr. Disney returned home in the middle of it, a miserable wreck after his night's debauch. Anthony touched up his sketches and listened to Georgiana's moans that her aunt's party was over. He watched Dorothy going about the house with strained eyes and colourless cheeks.

"I am going down to the village," she said, abruptly entering the room where Anthony and her sister were seated. "I shall not be back for supper unless the wind drops."

A moment later she passed the window, her head bent against the storm, one hand holding the hood of her black cloak on her hair.

"What a simpleton Dorothy is," said her sister, pettishly, "she thinks she can stop them from lighting the beacon, but she can't. She will only get into danger."

"I had better follow her," he said, starting to his feet.

"You had better stay here."

But Georgiana's words were lost. He was already out of the door and running down the steep hill to the quay.

"Have you seen Miss Disney pass?" he asked a man standing in a doorway.

"Yes, sir."

Anthony looked at the man, surprised at the unusual civility of tone and words; he saw he was speaking to the coastguard who preferred to be blind to what happened.

"The young lady went down to the quay, sir. She's bent on stopping things to-night, but it's no use; they are buzzing like wasps and she'll only come to harm herself if she stays among them."

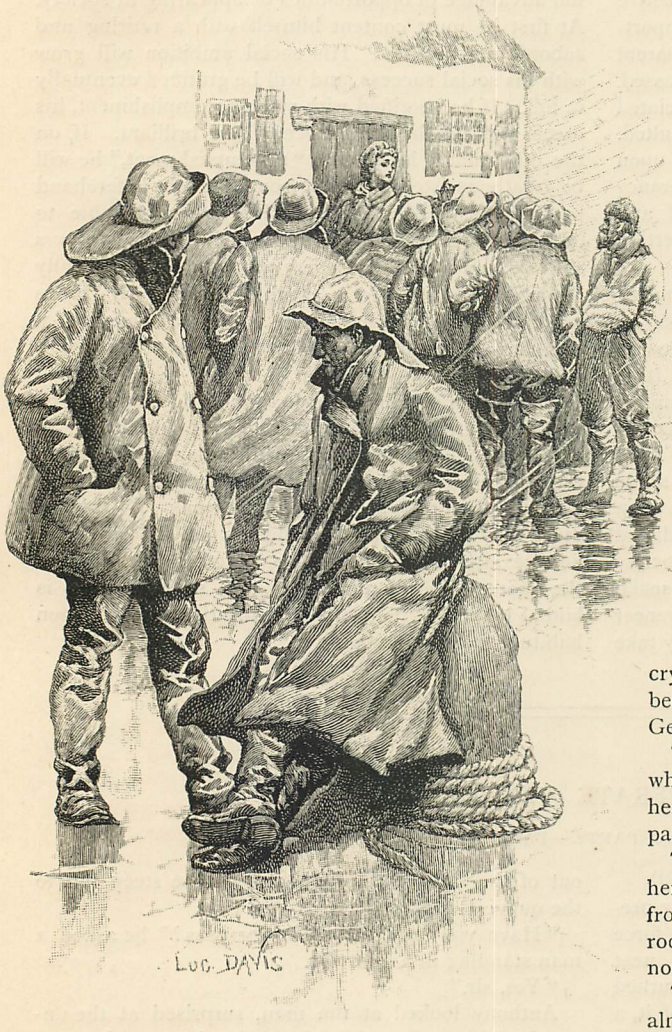
"Why are you not keeping order, instead of staying in your cottage?" said Anthony, angrily.

"I've a wife and children, and there's nothing for 'em if anything happens to me."

"You had better do your duty," said Anthony sternly, and hurried on.

The wind was too high for the rain to be continuous; it came in gusts of sharp, cold showers: one was passing over the dark, lowering sky as he came on the quay. Small waves, crested with white foam, dotted the broad river, of a cold, steely colour. The ferry boat crossing had its red sail nearly touching the water, heeling over with the wind.

But in spite of rain, wind, and storm, the quay was alive with fishermen in sou'-westers tied under their chins, and long coats flapping in the wind. Groups



"A LARGER GROUP WAS GATHERED ROUND SOMEONE AT THE FARTHER END."

of twos and threes chatted and looked at the weather ; a larger group was gathered round someone at the farther end. Thither Anthony made his way. He was conscious that the men stared and made remarks as he passed. One even jostled him rudely, but he kept his temper and went on. The larger group at the farther end of the quay was gathered round his cousin Dorothy.

"I warn you for the last time," she was saying. "If you light the beacon to-night, to-morrow I go to Exford and inform against you. What was that you said, Jem Ball, 'that I should not get to Exford alive'? Would you stop me? I know something against you ; be careful! Jack Westacott, Robert Hill," she mentioned a dozen names, "I warn you for the last time!"

She was standing on the door-step of a cottage facing the fishermen. There was no pleading in her attitude or face. She faced the rough, sullen men dauntlessly, her eyes moving from one face to another as she mentioned their names.

Anthony shouldered his way through the crowd.

"You are to come home with me," he said, laying his hand on her arm. "At once," he said resolutely, as she tried to draw her arm away.

Their faces were nearly on a level as she stood on the low step ; she looked at him and from him to the sullen, angry faces behind. Perhaps something in the fishermen's looks decided her, or perhaps she felt that she had met her master. At any rate, she gave in, and allowed him to lead her away. The men fell back to let them pass through, and in silence they hurried across the quay and up the steep hill to the vicarage.

"A woman cannot deal with men like that," said Anthony, when they were safe in the vicarage garden. "A second later and they would have attacked you."

She did not answer, but pushed past him, muttering something, and fled upstairs.

"I met Dorothy on the stairs and she was crying. I have never seen her cry before. It's because you forced her to come home," said Georgiana to him.

There were no signs of tears about the Dorothy who came down to supper. Only once did he see her start and flush—when men's shouts were heard passing the garden wall of the vicarage.

They went to bed early, Georgiana tired with her evening before, Mr. Disney not yet recovered from his drinking bout. Dorothy had gone to her room immediately after supper, and Anthony was not sorry when the evening ended.

The storm was rising ; to sleep with the wind almost beating the casement in was out of the question. He smoked and wrote a letter to an aunt. The letter concerned Dorothy ; he thought she deserved a better fate than to be left to harden into a stone in this uncongenial atmosphere. He was writing to his aunt to ask her to take Dorothy as a companion. It was a difficult letter to write, and many were the pauses. In one of them he heard a footstep pass his door and creep downstairs, the front door opened softly and then closed with a bang, as though pulled by the wind from unwilling fingers. He drew aside the curtain and looked out. Across the garden flew a figure which he recognised as Dorothy's. Foolish woman! She was off to imperil her life again, and there was no one to stop her but himself. He ran downstairs but the hall door was difficult to open and she had gained a few minutes' start of him. He ran across the garden, leapt the low wall into the churchyard, and, keeping to the left, scrambled on to the beach. The night was too dark to let him see where she had gone and there had been time lost in crossing the churchyard. But as he paused to consider which way he should go, a bright light shot up in the direction where he remembered Mrs.

Yeo's farmhouse to be. He could see it plainly from where he stood on the beach ; it was on high ground and the flames stood out against the dark sky. This must be the beacon, and there Dorothy would go with some mad purpose of stopping the lighting of it. In his sketching expeditions about the neighbourhood he had grown pretty familiar with the lanes and roads. There was a narrow lane leading from the beach to the high land overlooking the bay. Up this lane, buffeted by the wind, the rain beating against his face, he hurried. What might happen to her among these lawless men, their passions roused? She had said they were devils. If he could but stop her before she got to the beacon. But that was hopeless, she had had too much start, and probably she knew a shorter way than the road by which he had come. The beacon was burning more brightly, he could hear the shouts and laughs of the men throwing on tar and dry fuel to heighten the blaze.

A sudden silence fell on the men's voices and then arose a louder hubbub than before. But there was a note of anger now in the tones : before, laughter had predominated. She must have arrived. He ran faster and scrambled over the low stone wall which ran round the sides of the bare field, the fourth side was the edge of the cliff which rose two hundred feet above the stony beach below.

The bonfire was several hundred yards from the edge, and the figures of the men, women, and children gathered round it stood out in black grotesqueness against the flames. A stone from the loosely-built wall fell on his foot and injured it as he climbed across, but he limped on towards the group round the flaming beacon.

Children with blackened faces were chasing one another round the fire, pulling out bits of burning stick and throwing them about. One or two women were present but the greater part were men.

A scud of rain made the fire hiss ; it beat in their faces from the blackness where they knew the sea to be.

Dorothy was going from one man to another, begging, entreating, ordering, but laughter or anger were her only answers. Standing over the fire, feeding it with tar, stood Bill Easterbrook, sullen and passionate.

She was speaking to him as Anthony drew near.

"Easterbrook, come away. You have never joined before in this wickedness ; give it up now before it is too late."

"He'll follow 'ee for a kiss," said one of the other men provoking a laugh from the crowd.

"You will regret it to-morrow ; you have always said it was hellish work."

Easterbrook's answer was to pour more tar on the flames.

"To-morrow I inform against the leaders in this business unless you put out this fire immediately. Do you hear? All of you ?"

A sullen murmur answered her.

She stood by Easterbrook's side ; Anthony could not catch what she said in the mutter that had greeted her threat, but he saw her, with a sudden movement, snatch the jar of tar from Easterbrook and throw it against the wall at their backs with a crash. Before the men could stop her she ran to where a cask, half-full of tar, stood, and pushed it over. The contents rolled harmlessly over the grass, wasted.

"Now !" she cried, "I have done it !" and faced them triumphantly.

Anthony limped to her side. He had crept up to the crowd unnoticed in the general excitement.

Astonishment at her daring to defy them made the men silent for a second, but when they saw Anthony standing by her side in the light of the blazing fire, their rage burst forth.

"You here ! Why have you come ?" said Dorothy in the moment's pause, and in a despairing voice.

"I followed you."

"Another of 'em !" shouted Jem Ball.

"Us'll make her pay for this work," said another.

Easterbrook said nothing, his face was white with passion, and there was a dangerous look in his eyes. He crept towards Anthony whose back was towards him.

"Anthony !" Dorothy clutched his arm and he turned in time.

He swung out his right arm and caught Easterbrook a blow which made him drop the knife he held and stagger back.

"Anthony ! Anthony !" he felt his cousin trembling and clinging to him with fright, which was not called forth by her own peril.

"Keep behind me and do not cling," he said, and she did as she was told.

There was a confused rush and Anthony was borne backwards, hitting out right and left, until he felt the wall at his back.

"Climb the wall and run," he gasped, breathless with the fight.

But Dorothy gave no answer. She had saved his life twice, once she caught a wrist ready to plunge a knife into him over her shoulder, once she pulled him aside to avoid a blow her quick eye saw coming. Luckily for Anthony there were only three men armed with knives and ready to use them, and let it be said—for the honour of Englishmen—these three were half-bred Spaniards. There was hardly a family at Lee without an intermixture of foreign blood. Anthony stood his ground manfully, but one man against twenty cannot do much, however well he may be able to use his fists. He was overpowered and thrown. Three men held him down and the rest deliberated what should be done with him. Dorothy knelt by his head.

The women and children had disappeared—ordered roughly off by the men ; the bonfire had sunk down without continual relays of fresh fuel ; the men's figures looked a confused mass, their faces invisible in the darkness. Anthony could hear the surf away to his right beating on the bar, the breakers thundered on the rocks at the foot of the cliff and the men's voices rose and fell in grim laughter as they stood a few paces from him. Dorothy said nothing, she wiped

the rain from his face, and tried to hear what was said by the group round the fire.

"Let's treat 'un as us did the coastguard," said Easterbrook's voice savagely.

Anthony remembered what that had been—run through and through with needles like skewers. Dorothy's fingers trembled as they touched his face.

Easterbrook's proposal seemed to meet with approval. There was a laugh and the men came towards Anthony, who was held down by the three men.

Dorothy rose to her feet and stood over him.

"Do you call yourselves men!" she said in a low, clear voice. "Do you call yourselves men to propose such a thing. My cousin has done nothing. You attacked him and he fought. It was I who tried to put out your fire, I who intended to inform on you. Let him go, he will say nothing and I will keep silence if——"

"Don't believe her, her's only saying it to get 'un off, and they'll go and peach on us to-morrer," broke in Easterbrook's voice.

"Have I ever broken my word to any one of you? Let him go and I will be silent and so shall he. It is I you ought to fear. He cares nothing for what you do; he leaves Lee on Monday and you will never see him again."

"Don't listen to passon's darter. He's safer out of the way where he can't tell no tales," said Jem Ball, "an' so would be passon's darter too."

But the second proposal met with no response. Bad as they were, they were not bad enough to deliberately murder the woman who had been among them all her life, whom for the greater part they had liked and feared.

"If you kill him you shall suffer for it. Every man who touches him shall hang for it. Before God I swear I will never rest until you are brought to justice if you hurt him."

She had thrown prudence to the winds and blazed forth at them.

"Suppose us pitch 'un over the cliff," said one of the elder men, "folks do fall over by accident like, ye know, why shouldn't 'ee?"

"By accident like" was repeated with a laugh.

"There was some nasty inquiries about that there coastguard, if you remember. Nought could be said 'bout a accident, and as for passon's darter, us must silence her somehow. If her was kept in the 'ouse with a cough now, eh?"

And the man leered and winked at the others.

"That's it, us'll pitch 'un over the cliff," shouted the men and advanced once more.

It was useless for Dorothy to threaten or plead; the die was cast, she threw herself on the ground beside her cousin and wound her arms round him.

"You shall not touch him or you shall kill me with him, you cowards, you brutes!" she shrieked.

"You had better leave me to my fate. Get away now, off to the nearest town and——" muttered Anthony in her ear.

"Never, never," she interrupted him. "I would die for you if I could. I will die with you."

The men roughly tried to drag her away but she clung with might and main to him and they could not unloose her arms.

"Anthony! why did you follow me? I have killed you," she muttered, her head against his shoulder. "I have killed you."

They tied his hands and feet to prevent his struggling; Dorothy clinging to him all the time. They lifted him, two men at his shoulders, two at his feet, and carried him towards the edge of the cliff. Dorothy clung to him and threw her weight back but they dragged her with them.

The rain was coming down steadily and the wind had dropped. Pitch black above him and before him were sky and sea and cliff; behind him were a few faint gleams from the dying fire. Was this to be the end of his life? In the glory of his manhood, when life was opening out new possibilities, to be killed in a little country village by a rough crew of fishermen?

"Us'll have to go down to the rocks and take the ropes off 'un," said the old man who proposed throwing him over the cliff. "'Ee walked over by accident in the dark. Us is as innercent as babes unborn, eh?"

"It'll spoil his beauty," laughed Easterbrook savagely.

They were slowly nearing the edge, the roar of the breakers was growing louder.

"Try and get passon's lass away, Bill; us don't want to haive her over with 'un."

"Send 'er with 'un; 'er loves 'un," answered Easterbrook.

Anthony felt Dorothy's hand fumbling in his pockets.

"Your knife?" she whispered.

"In my breast pocket."

He understood, but he knew it was useless. If he were free he could not escape with his injured foot.

She pulled the knife out with her left hand and opened it with her teeth, never relaxing her hold of him with her right hand. She blessed her strength that moment. In the darkness the men carrying Anthony could not see what she was doing as she cut the cord binding his hands. A noise behind them made them pause and listen; in that instant she cut the rope at his feet and he was free. With a kick and struggle he was on his feet and had seized Dorothy's arm.

"Out of the light of the fire," he said.

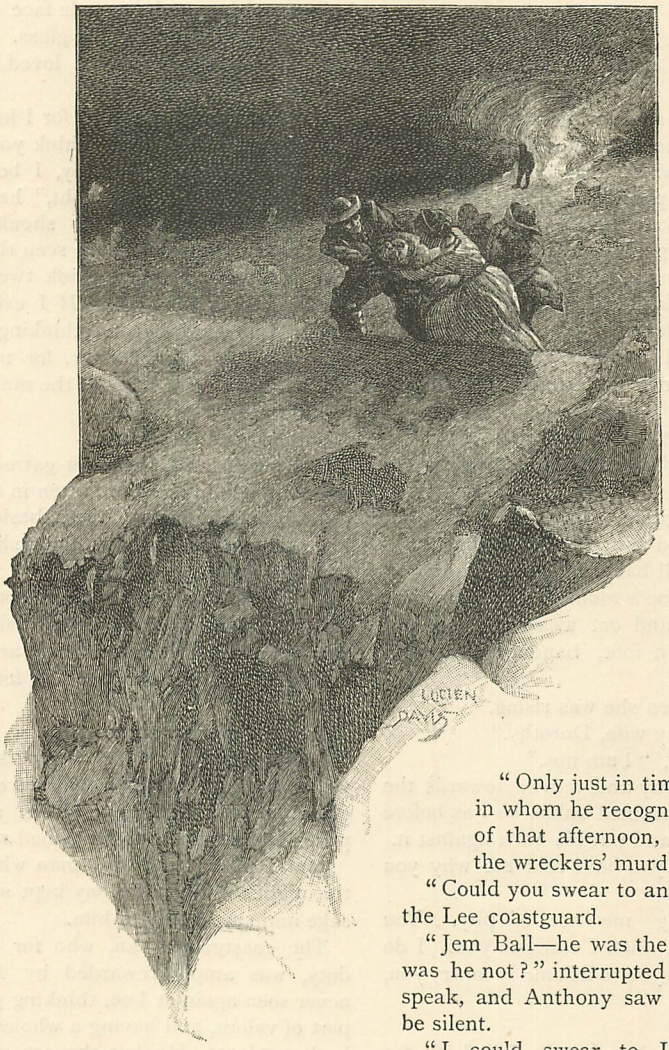
Luckily for them the bonfire had burnt down to a few dull embers, and the night was pitch dark. In the confusion of Anthony's sudden assault on his captors and their astonishment at his getting free, he and Dorothy managed to run a few yards away from them. But Anthony, limping painfully along, knew that they must be caught soon. He could not run, and the fishermen had lanterns by the fire, it would take them but a few seconds to fetch them.

"Run, Dorothy," he said, "you know your way."

"Listen! what is that?"

Men's voices were heard coming from the village,

the sound of tramping feet. The fishermen heard it too; they paused in their cursing to listen and the three men who were on their way to fetch the lanterns stopped half-way. Anthony could see them outlined against the red embers of the bonfire.



"THEY WERE SLOWLY NEARING THE EDGE" (*p.* 630).

"It's the coastguards," shouted one, "there's a dozen of 'em."

"That fellow Willing has fetched 'em from Exford, curse him! It's all up; we'd better get off!"

The men's muttered remarks reached Anthony and Dorothy standing in the darkness and rain a few paces from them.

"Us can creep away and get back by the cliff path," suggested the man who had proposed the "accident" that was to befall Anthony.

Silently they crept away in the opposite direction to where Anthony and Dorothy were waiting with beating hearts. The coastguards' voices and the tread of their feet drew nearer.

Anthony shouted and was answered.

He limped towards the coastguardsmen who had stopped and gathered about the fire, followed by Dorothy.

"Only just in time," he said to the leader, in whom he recognised the coastguardsman of that afternoon, and he told the story of the wreckers' murderous attempt on his life.

"Could you swear to anyone, sir?" asked Willing, the Lee coastguard.

"Jem Ball—he was the only one you recognised, was he not?" interrupted Dorothy, before he could speak, and Anthony saw that she wished him to be silent.

"I could swear to Jem Ball," he answered quickly.

"He's a bad lot. You and the young lady had better get home, sir. We must follow the men round the cliff path and try to catch 'em. It was a good thing I drove to Exford and got help to stop this night's doings, sir!"

"It was, indeed," said Anthony; "come up to the vicarage to-morrow."

"I shall be out of Lee by then, sir. It won't be safe for me to stop. I shall go back to Exford."

"Send me your address then."

"I should like to say, sir, as 'twas your words that made me fetch help. I thought as I would do my duty to-night."

A few more words and he hurried after the men

who were searching for the wreckers. The bonfire had been kicked out by the coastguardsmen and there was nothing to break the blackness of the night but the lanterns carried by the coastguards in their search, dotted like fireflies along the cliff.

Dorothy drew a long breath.

"They will never catch them," she said under her breath.

"I hope they will. It was only for your sake, Dorothy, that I did not give up all the names I knew."

Through the rain, mud, and darkness, they dragged themselves wearily back to the vicarage. It seemed like a dream to Anthony when he saw the light in the window of his room as he painfully limped across the garden. The door was not locked.

"We have only been gone two hours," he said, looking at the loudly-ticking clock in the silent house.

The candle he had brought down from his room still burnt on the hall-table. No one had been disturbed by their exit and entrance; the Reverend James Disney, his younger daughter, and the servant slept peacefully.

He followed Dorothy into the dining-room.

"Drink this," she said, pouring out brandy for him.

"Not unless you drink first."

She made a wry face and swallowed some hastily.

"Now," she said, "I will bandage your foot. Everything is here; I shall not be a moment."

She knelt at his feet and cut away the boot and stocking from his swollen foot, bandaging it with skilful, steady fingers.

He caught her hand when she was rising.

"You are going to be my wife, Dorothy."

"No," she said, steadily, "I am not."

She pulled her hand away and moved towards the door, but, in spite of his sprained ankle, he was before her. He closed the door and put his back against it.

"You will not go until you have told me why you will not marry me."

"You are only asking me out of pity. You found out that I loved you when I clung to you. I do love you and it is noble of you to ask me to marry you, but——"

"I am not at all noble."

"Look at me!" she continued, "do I look fit for you? I am old and plain and——"

"What has that to do with it if I love you?"

"Nothing, if you loved me. Sit down, your foot hurts you."

"You will not run away until I give you leave?"

"No."

He left the door and seated himself.

"Why do you think I do not love you?"

She stood before the long glass at the end of the room and looked at herself. Her wet dress, stained with mud and grass stains, clung to her figure, a large rent in the front; a strand of hair hung dank and dark with rain across her bosom; the red handkerchief she wore tied round her head, instead of hat or bonnet, had fallen back and hung round her neck; her eyes hollow and haggard, her pale face and trembling lips were reflected clearly in the glass.

"Am I a woman to be loved?" she said, with a half-sob.

"It seems so," he said, "for I love you."

"Oh! no, no; you only think you do!"

"'Pon my word, Dorothy, I believe you are only eight instead of twenty-eight," he stood behind her and put his hands on her shoulders. "Any other woman but you would have seen that I was falling in love with you. I do not think twenty-eight very old, nor do I think you plain. If I ever did I forget the time. I have got beyond thinking of your looks. I want you, Dorothy Disney, for my wife, and if you will not have me I shall be the most miserable fellow in the world."

That settled the matter.

Their weariness, their wet garments, what they had gone through, all was forgotten in the first knowledge of their mutual love. Others, besides her lover, would have called Dorothy beautiful as she lifted her glorified face and deep eyes to his.

"I shall take you away as soon as possible from Lee," he said, before they parted for the night. "I shall go to Exford to-morrow to arrange for our wedding and I shall come back to fetch you in a day or two."

It was done as he said.

Neither Dorothy's father nor sister would go to her wedding. Her father would have done so if Georgiana, vexed and angry at her sister's winning the prize she had meant to have, had not prevented him.

Jem Ball was the only man who was punished for the night's work; Anthony kept silence for his wife's sake and swore only to him.

The coastguardsman, who for once had done his duty, was amply rewarded by Anthony. He was never seen again at Lee, thinking prudence the better part of valour, and having a wholesome horror of that lawless place. He left the coastguard service rather than return. But Lee itself has grown quieter. Anthony's efforts and influence were used to have a strong body of coastguardsmen settled there. He was successful and in a few months wrecking was practically at an end as a flourishing trade.

Dorothy never saw her father again. He died a year after her wedding, and Georgiana married one of her cousins Yeo.

CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.—WHAT TO WEAR IN SEPTEMBER.

FROM OUR PARIS AND LONDON CORRESPONDENTS.

I.—FROM OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.

"SIMPLICITY" was a favourite butt of the satirists on dress a few years ago; now there is no lack of simplicity intermixed with a great deal that is loud and resonant. But there never was a period to my thinking in the history of costume, when a sweet young girl could display her charms to greater advantage, even in France, where the *jeune fille* is a personage who is not allowed to put herself *en evidence* at all, and has to be entirely guided by her pastors, masters and mistresses.

But even in France there are *jours de fête* and red letter days in young ladies' existences when a simple frock is a necessity, and I have sketched for your benefit a specimen which I consider simply delightful and, moreover, quite suited to home dressmaking. I have really nothing to point out to you with regard to the skirt, except that it is severely plain, and with a certain amount of fulness introduced into the front breadths at the waist by the simple method of gathers. They are not sufficiently marked to assert themselves, but they give a certain flow of grace, which, with what I have seen of English dressmaking, is often lacking in skirts that emanate from London houses.

It is quite true in France, that the skirts are plain and simple, but they do not show the outline of the limbs in the undesirable manner in which I notice they so often do in England. This skirt has a simple trimming at the edge—namely, a plain ribbon gathered in the centre, and sewn on sufficiently full for the satin edge to be visible. The bodice is full and gathered into a band at the neck, but the form of corselet is new. It is arranged with accordion pleated silk, wide at the left side, and narrow at the right, so that across the front of the waist it is carried up diagonally. A pretty young friend of mine had this model made up in soft woollen with white silk; the original model from which the sketch was made was fawn colour trimmed with vieux rose.

But mark the sleeves; they end at the elbow, being formed of a puff of the fawn colour and a couple of pink frills set in a pink band, and the long gloves meet them. Now whether we like it or not, and whether we consider it convenient or not, I am afraid we shall have to reconcile ourselves to the fact that these short sleeves are coming in again, and we can only hope that the low bodices which were worn out of doors by our grandmothers at the time when these short sleeves were in fashion at the beginning of this

"LET US GO ON THE BEACH."

century, are not to be our fate also. I have by me a picture of my grandmother dressed in a short white muslin skirt, the bodice ending just below the bust, the sleeves at the elbow, a black silk frilled scarf thrown lightly around her neck, the ends reaching to the hem of the skirt, the bodice reaching only to the shoulders. She has long ruffled gloves without any buttons, her hands are encased in a large muff, and we shall soon be following that fashion at all events. Family tradition tells that she wore this particular costume at a large family gathering preliminary to a wedding, which took place in May, but I am quite sure that we are justified in thinking the seasons have greatly changed since then. A low bodice out of doors and a white muslin gown in May would at this end of the century mean an early death.

September is a month when we may wear either summer or winter clothes, and so I will give you a new and pretty way of making up a black lace dress because if you elect to wear it in September you are likely to find it useful for home dinner wear all through the winter. We used to think it impossible to make up black lace over any but a plain coloured silk, but the underskirt here is a striped pink of two shades with a dash of heliotrope in it. I hope you admire the trimming on the skirt, for in Paris we have not abjured every kind of garniture as you seem to do in England. The bows are made in black moire ribbon; they consist simply of two loops and two ends united by a crossed piece, the bows turning upwards, the ends downwards. The bodice and skirt are sewn together, and the union hidden by a black band with ribbon tied at the side. The Zouave jacket of black lace is lined with the silk, and opens over a plain bodice covered in front with a thick make of lace. The model was *point de Venise*, but every woman does not possess this, consequently I would suggest that almost any other make of white lace would do. The sleeve is one of a new kind with a large lace covered puff, meeting a close-fitting undersleeve half way between the elbow and the shoulder, the white lace reappearing at the cuff. The neck is finished off with a Henri II. band of black ribbon surmounted by a ruffle, and I may mention in parenthesis that this should be accepted by women who have passed their *première jeunesse*, for it hides the soft flabby flesh and double chin which are apt to come towards the meridian of life.

French milliners trim both hats and bonnets principally in front, English milliners at the back, and the fan of lace which is introduced in the front of this hat is one of the newest styles.

Children we have always with us, and they have to be much considered when the question of dress is on the *tapis* in families. I have here given two styles, the one for warm weather, the other when the first touch of autumn begins to be felt. The elder child wears a pretty *mousseline de laine* frock, the ground is of grey scattered over with multi-coloured flowers, the skirt made perfectly plain and rather full at the back. Round the waist and at the cuffs are ribbons half red and half yellow. The little bodice is made full. For out of doors a deep piece of white lace flouncing is gathered into a band and is sufficiently deep to cover the shoulders well. The hat is surrounded by a wreath of pinks of the same tone as the ribbons. I do not think I need attempt to describe to you the dress of the younger child; the sketch suffices, but I may mention that bands of woven galons are to be the fashionable trimming for the winter, and that one of the newest styles has been used round the skirt. The little coat is made of fawn-coloured lamb's wool embroidered in black.

The waterfall ties are a novelty this year. You can quite easily make them yourself if you like, for they are simply a fully gathered strip of material, say chiffon, about a yard wide, edged with lace, and sufficiently long to reach to the waist. Over this is another about six inches shorter, and at the neck they are drawn so closely together that they are easily secured by a brooch. These give quite a different aspect to a dress, and white with black lace—as well as white with écru lace—are extremely pretty. Women who dress well and inexpensively have been making a great variety in their toilettes by means of these ties.

II.—FROM OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENT.

STRIPES are likely to succeed checks as the winter and autumn approach, and the two friends in our illustration who are starting for the annual garden-party given by the squire at their pretty village home have both elected, you see, to appear in striped materials, and they are curiously coloured. The one is blue with a faint line of greenish yellow in it. This is among the newest colours of the season, and I have not been able to find that any dressmaker or fashion-writer has suggested a name that really conveys the actual tint. I have seen it sometimes in the young spring reeds which feather the edge of a pond, and I think that fact of itself would show you how extremely pretty it is.

It harmonises charmingly with the grey blues now so much to the fore, but if you wish to dress up to date you must cast to the winds all the old-fashioned prejudices as to colours. We have set them all aside. In fashionable society in London this year I have seen many pretty girls with dresses of light blue, trimmed with grass green, and what an extraordinary mixture we should have thought that some years ago!

The gown now in question is trimmed with a beautiful beadwork of exactly the same colouring. This is placed about six inches above the hem, and forms the belt. The skirt has no other trimming, and is severely simple, just touching the ground, for long dresses are neither worn in London nor in Paris. The belt is sewn to the top of the skirt, which is put on over the bodice. This has no seams whatever at the back, and is slightly fulled in front, the selvedge forming a cascade. A straight band of the material is placed at the neck. The sleeves are cut in the gigot form, and are broad rather than high. The vest is simply gathered, and made of silk of the same yellow tint as the stripes.

The bonnet is infinitesimal. It is made of butter-

cups, which border the brim, and is slightly pointed in the centre of the face. The crown is covered with a tiny piece of lace, gathered in the centre, and a perfectly flat bow of ribbon is placed in front of the buttercup aigrette.

The figure on the left wears a slightly larger bonnet, made of daisies and green leaves, and here the tuft stands up in the centre over the face. Her gown is rather more summer-like, and is made of striped blue and white crépon, with a band of white guipure round the foot, a cross-cut piece of material, doubled and gathered in the centre, is placed not only at the hem of the skirt, but at the heading of the lace. The ribbon used here at the waist is of a rich claret-colour, tied in an endless bow at one side. The two puffs on the sleeves are divided by bands of the same, and a wider one encircles the throat. The white lace placed in front is draped, as you will see, in a rounded form.

A SEPTEMBER WALK.

If you happen to have by you any old-fashioned real lace veils, you will find that they can be turned to account admirably in this way. The pleated frill of the material indicates a change in fashion which wise women should do their best to avert: namely, a disposition for cuffs, etc., to fall over the hand as they used to do in the middle ages. A clever Frenchwoman, who was showing me some sleeves in this style, pointed out that nobody need object to them, because there was always the option of turning them back. They are much worn on tea-gowns, which are thus over-long or else end at the elbow, the elbow sleeves being occasionally supplemented by long pendant ones from the shoulders.

I am going to describe to you one of the most beautiful dresses of the tea-gown order I have ever seen. It was made of a satin, gold-colour shot with pink, and any trimming that was used was some rich lace, headed by bands of mother-of-pearl, which seemed to reflect the different shades in the material. The sleeves were made high, ending at the elbow with long pointed lace ruffles, and a distinct Watteau train came from the top of the high bodice, and was almost entirely covered with lace. If you have by you a store either of black or white lace, which so many women have, you might advisedly transform some old gown in this way.

In furbishing up a half worn-out gown, the fashionable black trimming will be found to be of great aid. Black moire or black satin, or even black velvet, can be used on almost any colour, and moire is going to be a favourite material throughout the winter.

For driving in the country, for slipping on at tennis-parties when the weather turns chilly, and for the seaside, it seems to me that the Russian jacket has no rival. It is generally made of fine serge or a light cloth. It comes almost to the knee, has a belt round the waist and a band round the neck, the sleeves being gathered into bands also at the wrist, and it is generally trimmed with a straight-edged galon, in which red, blue, and gold appear. A clever tailor has recently invented an easy plan by which the whole-back jackets can be drawn into the waist at the back. A couple of loops are placed in the side-seams under the arm, and an easily-detachable belt hooks into these, drawing in the fulness in the Russian style, but when removed, the loops are almost invisible.

One of the newest hat trimmings for adults is a large bow of a stiff natural leaf, dyed—some say it is palm and others the leaf of the tobacco-plant. At all events, it will stand the wear and tear of weather, and is decidedly ornamental.

THE GATHERER:

AN ILLUSTRATED RECORD OF INVENTION, DISCOVERY, LITERATURE, AND SCIENCE.

Correspondents are requested, when applying to the Editor for the names and addresses of the persons from whom further particulars respecting the articles in the GATHERER may be obtained, to forward a stamped and addressed envelope for reply, and in the case of inventors submitting specimens for notice, to prepay the carriage. The Editor cannot in any case guarantee absolute certainty of information, nor can he pledge himself to notice every article or work submitted.

An Automatic Well Cleaner.

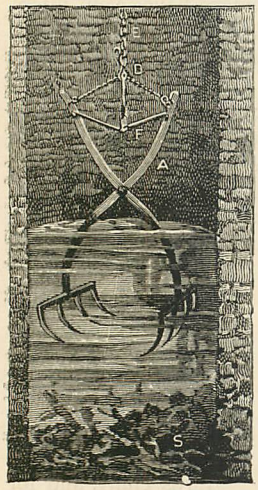


FIG. 1.

At the Warwick Show of the Royal Agricultural Society, an automatic grab for cleaning out wells was exhibited by a Wantage firm. The implement is illustrated in Figs. 1 and 2, where A A are the tongs which are lowered into the well. These are provided with teeth at their extremities to catch the rubbish or stones, S S, on the bottom. The tongs are lowered and raised by a rope or chain, E E, attached to an eye, D. The jointed strut, F, allows the prongs to close on the object, so that it can be hauled up to the surface. For mud without large stones, a pair of scoops is employed instead of the prongs.

Making India-Rubber.

Isoprene, a hydrocarbon discovered by Greville Williams among the products of the destructive distillation of india-rubber, can be made by the action of heat on oil of turpentine, and when brought into contact with a strong aqueous acid—for instance, hydrochloric—it is converted into a tough elastic solid, which is true india-rubber. Quite recently Dr. Tilden, F.R.S., found that some isoprene made from turpentine and kept in bottles had become thick and that lumps of a yellowish solid floated in it. This proved to be caoutchouc, and Dr. Tilden accounts for it by supposing that a small quantity of acetic or formic acid had been produced by the oxygen of the air. The rubber thus formed is indistinguishable from Para-rubber, and unites with sulphur to form vulcanite.

Has the Earth a Cometary Tail?

It is well known that the tails of comets stream away from the sun, and are of very low density. Various hypotheses have been propounded to explain their movement away from the sun; but the most promising is that of a Russian physicist, who ascribes it to the repulsion of the solar radiation acting on a mass of extreme tenuity, whilst, on the other hand, the attraction of gravitation operates between the solar mass and the solid nucleus of the comet. The same physicist accounts for the mysterious terrestrial phenomenon of the zodiacal light in the same way. He believes that the earth has also a tail of cosmic dust, not luminous of itself but by reflecting the sunlight.

A Sea-Stilling Net.

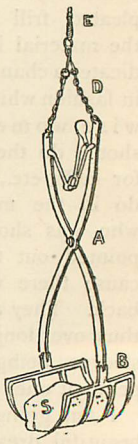
Baron d'Alessandro recently submitted to the French Salvage Society a species of net for stilling the waves around a vessel instead of a layer of oil. Sailors have observed that floating seaweed keeps down the waves, and Baron d'Alessandro's net is an imitation of these weeds. It floats on the surface without offering a resistance to the wind. A netting 1,000 yards square, having a mesh of five centimètres, was recently floated outside the breakwaters of the Quiberon Peninsula, and the results were so satisfactory as to cause the French Minister of Marine to appoint a special commission to report on the invention.

Silicon Films.

Mr. H. N. Warren, a well known chemist, has prepared films of silicon by decomposing silicon hydride by the electric discharge inside a glass tube. The films are deposited in the glass, and are chemically pure. Films consisting of silicon and carbon are also produced in the same way by mixing the silicon hydride with coal gas. Mr. Warren has hopes of being able to coat the carbon filaments of electric incandescent lamps with the silicon, so as to protect them from oxidation in the atmosphere.

Masrium.

Two years ago Johnson Pasha discovered a curious mineral in the bed of an old river of Upper Egypt, the Bahr-Bela-Ma, which on being analysed in the Khedivial Laboratory of Cairo was found to contain what appears to be a new element. Masrium, as it has been called after the Arabic name of Egypt, behaves like the metals of the alkaline earths and of the zinc group. Its oxide, for example, is white, and resembles the oxide of calcium. Its sulphate is also white, and combines with sulphate of alumina to form alum. The metal itself has not as yet been isolated, but its atomic weight is about 228.



AN AUTOMATIC WELL CLEANER. —FIG. 2.

The Fusibility of Steel.

Mr. F. I. R. Carulla of Derby has made the curious observation that the inside of a mild steel bar has a lower fusing-point than the outside, so that its core can be melted out, leaving the outer shell of the bar in its solid form. As the shell is of a tougher quality than the inside, any finishing of articles by paring off the shell on the lathe or planing machine is therefore to be avoided, and Mr. Carulla, in bringing his discovery before the Iron and Steel Institute, has expressed the opinion that the forging press should be used to fashion articles as nearly as possible into their finished state.

A Steam Tree-Feller.

Our engraving shows a combined tree-feller and cross-cut saw working by steam in the middle of a wood. The machine is not large, and can be fixed to the tree in two minutes. The smaller size will fell or saw trees four feet in diameter, and, as it weighs only four hundredweight, can be carried about by four men. It will saw down an oak of three feet diameter in five minutes, and eight trees, averaging thirty inches in diameter, in an hour. It works in any position, and can be readily applied by any man of ordinary intelligence following the printed instructions. The steam is conveyed to it by means of a flexible pipe from the generating boiler, as shown in the figure.

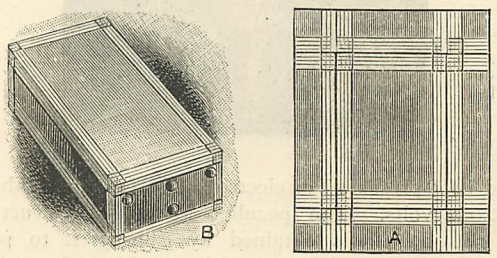
Tanning by Mimosa.

The bark of the Australian mimosa or "mangosa" tree is now used for tanning leather, to which it imparts a reddish hue. Like the leaves of the eucalyptus or gum tree it has also been employed for preventing the formation of crust in boilers. The deposit does not cake when the bark is present, but remains friable, and is easily scoured out of the boiler.

Manganese Putty.

A substitute for red-lead cement is to be found in the new German manganese putty which is adapted for steam engines, boilers, water and gas pipes, as well as for painting on iron to preserve it from rust. As its cost is about half that of red lead cement, its properties are well worth the study of engineers.

A New Box.

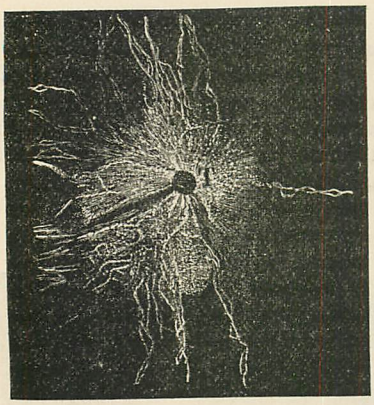


The little box which we illustrate is made by machinery from a single piece of board, which is first cross-cut, as shown at A, and then formed into the box B. The corners are pressed inwards from the outside, or "grooved," and the ends are doubled one over the other, and fastened by studs. The prepared boards are easily stored, and a separate machine applies the studs, thus forming them into boxes.

A STEAM TREE-FELLER.

The Electric Octopus.

Such was the name given to a radiating electrical discharge produced at the Crystal Palace Electrical Exhibition, and illustrated herewith. The current employed was of the alternating or see-saw type,



and its "pressure" or electromotive force was about 100,000 volts. The peculiar Medusa-like structure of the flash was obtained by causing it to pass from the terminal T over the surface of a glass plate, two feet square. While upon this subject, we may remind the reader of Mr. Tesla's experiment, in which a flame like that of a torch appears at a terminal, excited by an alternating current of very high pressure. This flame has been something of a mystery, in that it does not consume the terminal as the flame of a torch consumes the pitch. Mr. William Crookes, F.R.S., the well-known chemist, has lately given an explanation of it, which appears to be correct. The nitrogen of the air is really burning: that is to say, combining with the oxygen of the air to form nitrous and nitric acids. Some lightning flashes are believed to be alternating or see-saw, and their pressure is enormous. Hence they also produce combustion of the nitrogen of the air, with the formation of nitric acid; but luckily for us the surrounding atmosphere does not catch fire, else, as Mr. Crookes points out, the earth would be deluged with nitric acid.

Telling the South.

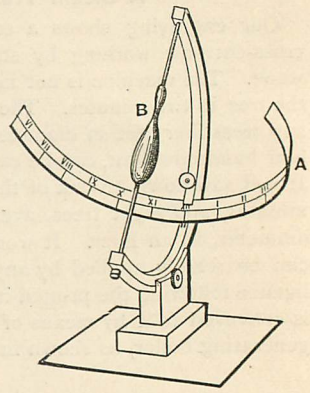
A military correspondent kindly calls our attention to an omission from our paragraph, on page 506 (July 1892), on this subject. The rule is, before noon you must count forward, after noon, you count backwards. This is a well known method in the army, and is taught to many infantry non-commissioned officers.

A Sandwich Indicator.

At many entertainments, in summer and winter alike, sandwiches play a much more prominent part among the refreshments than they used to do. And we are no longer restricted to the ham, beef, or tongue, of the last generation: writers in our own pages have shown what variety is possible. Some form of indicator has become necessary, and a very handy one has just been registered by Mrs. de Salis. It consists of a prettily stamped little metal dagger, which is thrust into the pile of sandwiches, and supports, by a tiny chain, a little frame, in which may be slipped a card indicating the kind of sandwich to be found on the dish.

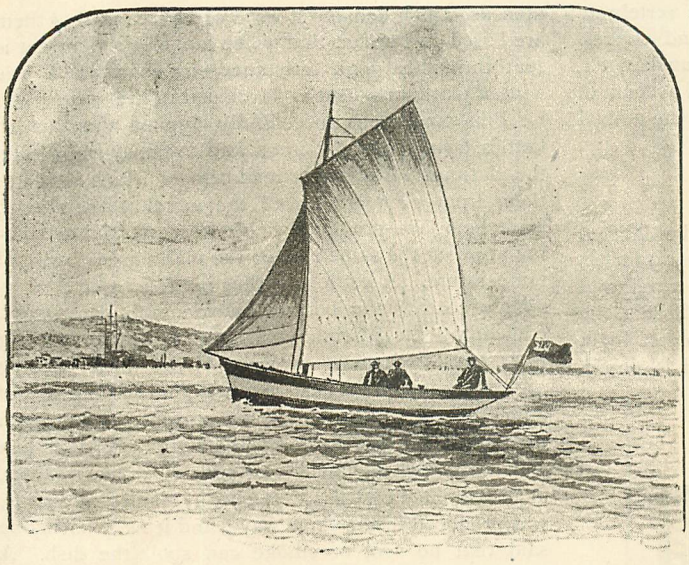
A Mean Time Sundial.

An ordinary sundial does not always keep the same time as does a clock or watch, for the solar day varies with the position of the earth throughout the year. Thus, when the earth is in perihelion the solar day is longer than the sidereal day, and the shadow of the gnomon is longer in coming round again to noon than when the earth is in aphelion. The mean time of a clock or watch corresponds to the average length of the solar day, and the "equation of time" gives the difference between the time by a clock and by a sundial. In short, it has to be added or subtracted from the dial time to give the clock time, and it sometimes amounts to over sixteen minutes. Major-General J. R. Oliver has recently invented a dial which makes its own correction for the equation of time, and shows the mean time like a clock. The apparatus is illustrated herewith, and consists of a semicircular arc, A, graduated with the hours, and a gnomon, B, shaped like a ninepin in place of a straight edge. The form is such that the shadow of its edge compensates for the equation of time, whatever the position of the sun below or above the equator. It is adapted for any latitude, and by means of the clamping screws shown, the two arcs are properly adjusted. Moreover, it can be set to show any required standard time, for example, that of Greenwich.



A Hundred Miles an Hour by Rail.

An electric railway between Chicago and St. Louis on which the cars will travel at a speed of a hundred miles an hour and perform the journey in less than three hours has been projected in the United States, and bids fair to be executed without loss of time. The cars, of a cigar shape, and neither large nor heavy, are to be propelled by electric motors connected to the axles of two driving wheels on each, and the current is to be supplied from a central station at a convenient point on the line. Telephones and electric lights will be provided throughout the route, and electric power is to be supplied to the district surrounding the central station. Meanwhile the works for utilising a portion of the water power of Niagara Falls are proceeding



AN ELECTRIC SAILING LAUNCH.

apace, and visitors to the Chicago Exhibition will probably see the scheme in operation. It has now been decided to employ fine wires and high pressure alternating currents for distributing the electricity at a distance, but of course transformers will be used to change the current into a more manageable and less dangerous form before it is actually used for light and power purposes.

A New "Sourdine."

In an operatic performance in Paris the cornets are fitted with a new Sourdine, or echo apparatus, which differs from those hitherto devised in not altering the natural tone of the instrument. It is simply a small chamber of silvered copper so constructed as to produce the echo when adjusted to the mouth of the trumpet.

Two New Launches.

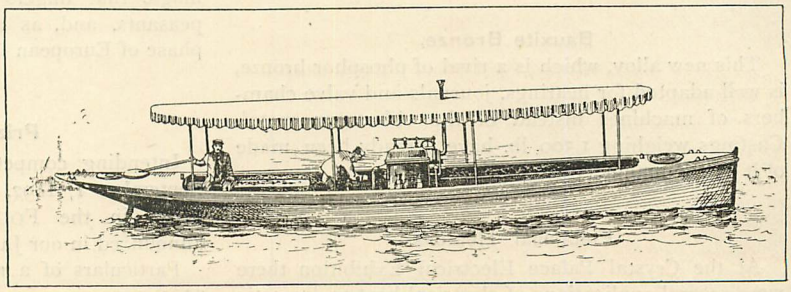
Some well-known ship-builders of Dumbarton have constructed an electric launch, which can also be propelled by sails, for the service of the harbour of Sydney. The craft is illustrated above, and measures forty feet by seven feet, and three feet nine inches in depth. Her weight, inclusive of mast and sails, is five tons. She is built diagonally of pine, with stem, stern-post, and floors of oak, keel of English elm, and longitudinals of Canadian elm. The bottom is sheathed with copper, and the deadwood at the stern is cut away in order to make way for a bronze bracket, which carries the propeller and rudder. The electric power is derived from an accumulator of seventy-six E.P.S. cells, and it drives a series-wound electric motor in a water-tight casing of brass. The average working current is forty ampères at one hundred and fifty volts, and the speed eight miles an hour. Boats, fitted either for sailing, rowing, or electric propulsion, are also being made for river use by a London firm. A very handsome petroleum launch was exhibited at the Warwick Show of the Royal Agricultural Society. It is illustrated at the foot of the page, where the petroleum engine is seen amidships. These machines are made of different sizes, from seven to eighteen horse-power, and are useful for many purposes, agricultural and horticultural, as well as locomotive.

Liquid Air.

At a recent lecture given in the Royal Institution, London, Professor Dewar presented Lord Kelvin and others of his auditors with claret glasses of liquid oxygen and common air. The first to liquefy these gases was M. Cailletet, a Frenchman, but Professor Dewar's plan is an improvement on his, and consists in employing the rapid vaporisation of oxygen already liquefied to produce intense cold which liquefies other oxygen or air, as the case may be. A tube open to the air at one end, if plunged in the liquid oxygen, will show the two constituent gases of air, oxygen and nitrogen, liquefying together. Liquid oxygen is strongly magnetic and so is liquid air. When placed between the poles of an electro-magnet it is forcibly attracted to them. At the same time it is a very bad conductor of electricity. An electric spark, 2 inches long in ordinary air, fails to pass through a film of the liquid air $\frac{1}{10}$ millimetre thick. The boiling point of liquid air is 192° Centigrade *below* zero, while that of liquid oxygen is 182° C. below zero. The liquid oxygen has a bluish tinge, but it and the air are clear and limpid.

A New Preservative.

Cocoanut oil mixed with carbolic acid is found by Mr. Haly, of the Colombo Museum, to be an excellent



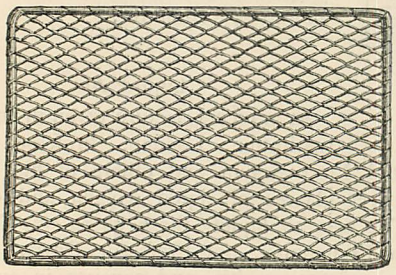
A PETROLEUM LAUNCH.

preservative of delicate specimens of the vertebrate animals, such as fishes, lizards, frogs, and snakes. They retain their brilliant colours in it unchanged, apparently for any length of time. A full account of Mr. Haly's experiments with it is given in the annual report of the Colombo Museum.

A Gigantic Board.

A redwood board, which will figure at the Chicago Exhibition, is 16 feet 5 inches long by 12 feet 9 inches wide and 5 inches thick. It was sawn from a redwood tree at Elk River, Humboldt County, California, the trunk of which was 35 feet in diameter, 300 feet high, and, probably, 1,500 years old. The wood is rich in the grain and takes a fine polish.

A New Wire Mat.



The wire mat which we illustrate, is made by weaving steel spirals together and stretching them on an iron frame. The meshes are so open that the dirt falls through, and the mat, which can be used either side up, is readily cleaned.

Plate-Glass Bricks.

The damp quartz sand used in polishing plate-glass has its edges worn off in the process, and becomes mixed with about thirteen per cent. of powdered plate-glass, as well as two per cent. of iron particles from the oscillating iron plates which have applied it to the surface of the glass. This adulterated sand has recently been utilised in the preparation of glass bricks. It is first moulded into the form of bricks under a pressure of several thousand pounds on the square inch then heated to a temperature of 2,732° Fah., which welds it into a white glass capable of withstanding frost and acids. The glass bricks are capable of resisting a pressure of nearly 6,000 pounds on the square inch.

Bauxite Bronze.

This new alloy, which is a rival of phosphor bronze, is well adapted for bearings, journals and valve chambers of machines instead of the older gun metal. Castings weighing 1,500 lb. have already been made of it by the manufacturing company.

Electrical Heaters.

At the Crystal Palace Electrical Exhibition there were several applications of electrical heat to domestic utensils, which demand a word of notice. All of them are based on the fact that when an electric current is sent through a high resistance—for example, a fine wire of platinum—heat is developed in the wire. Mr. G. Binswanger has successfully applied this fact to kettles, frying-pans, flat-irons, and so on, by embedding the platinum wires in a special cement, which insulates them from each other and the metal of the utensil, while being fire-proof, not liable to crack, and expanding at about the same rate as the platinum with rise of temperature. A kettle was thus rendered electrical by simply coating the bottom outside with the cement, embedding the platinum wires in it, and connecting their ends to binding screws. When these binding screws are joined by flexible conductors to the leads of an electric light installation, the current flows through the platinum wires, and heats the kettle. A frying-pan which will cook an omelette or pancake in two minutes, at an estimated cost of $\frac{1}{20}$th of a penny for electric energy, was produced in the same way; and it need hardly be said that no soot or smoke can spoil the dish. A flat-iron which will keep hot as long as it is connected in circuit, was also exhibited, and the source of heat is the same as in the kettle or frying-pan; but in this case the platinum wires are inside the body of the iron, just above the steel sole-plate. In a pair of curling-tongs shown, the wires were confined in the hollow handles.

Two New Stories.

In a dress that is staidness itself, Messrs. Cassell have issued a thrilling story of adventure and romance, by Mr. Lawrence Fletcher, who gives it the appropriate title, "Into the Unknown." It would be as unfair as it would be difficult to attempt any summary of the incidents in the plot's unravelling, many of which are distinctly novel. The scene is laid in the familiar ground of adventurous romance, South Africa, and the characters are well-drawn. Ten years ago such stories were supposed to appeal only to boys, but experience has shown of late that many readers who are on the look-out for such works have long left boyhood behind.—The scene of the second story before us is far less familiar, being none other than Grecian Eubœa, for the story is "The Herb of Love," by Georgios Drosines, translated for the "Pseudonym Library" by Elizabeth M. Edmonds, and published by Mr. Fisher Unwin. It is a quaintly told story of the village superstition and belief in magic that lingers to this day among the Greek peasants, and, as a presentment of a little-known phase of European life, is specially interesting.

Prize Competitions.

Intending competitors are again reminded that September 1, 1892, is the latest date for receiving MSS. in the FOUR PART STORY COMPETITION announced in our January Number.

Particulars of a new SIX PART STORY COMPETITION were given in our July Number.

(*Drawn by* G. H. Sydney Cowell.)

A QUIET CORNER.

BARBARA MERIVALE.

By ARABELLA M. HOPKINSON, Author of "The Probation of Dorothy Travers," "Vere Thornleigh's Inheritance," "A Woman's Strength," etc. etc.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

WINTER WEATHER.

OLIVER and Richmond had arrived at one and the same conclusion, although they had travelled thither by very different routes. This conclusion was that if they wished to secure Barbara's affections, or to enjoy her friendship, they must be careful and rational in their conversation with her, and must make no allusions to their own feelings, until such time as her confidence in them should be fully restored.

Oliver had acted on this theory in his last interview with her, and had been so pleased with the result that he had returned to Ireland in high spirits, quite undashed by a short conversation he had held with his father on the way to the station.

"Oliver," said Lord Denzil, as he drove through the town, passing the Vicarage, "is there anything in all that chaff that went on at dinner this evening about your spending the afternoon there?" pointing with his whip towards the Vicarage. "Are you really smitten in that direction?"

Mr. Denzil nodded. He had a big cigar in his mouth.

"Isn't it rather foolish, eh?" asked his father.

"I think not," said Oliver.

"It's not the match you ought to make, you know."

"I don't know what the match is that I ought to make," he answered, "but this is the one I mean to make, that is, if I can," smiling at his father. "But don't distress yourself prematurely; she doesn't care for me a rush, and probably never will."

"Don't offer me that comfort, my dear boy. She'll marry you fast enough, and jump at you too, if you ask her."

"I'd rather not hear her spoken of like that," said Oliver quietly. "She's very different from most girls."

"Oh, indeed!" said Lord Denzil. "I'm glad to hear it. In the meantime, I take it from that speech that you're rather hard hit. Well, she is a nice little girl; I don't dislike her myself."

Oliver laughed.

"Then we understand each other, father," he said; "but pray keep it close."

"Of course, of course. Only, why, in the name of all that is wonderful, let the poor child go on toiling and moiling away at her lessons, living with that admirable, but most exasperating, stepmother of hers, on a crab and a carrot, if you mean to marry her?"

"I think it best," said Oliver.

"Come, Oliver," said Lord Denzil, "let's have it out. What does it mean? Have you asked her?"

"Yes."

"And she won't have you?"

"No."

"Bravo, fair Barbara! I beg your pardon, Oliver, I really do, and I am sorry for you, but it is refreshing to meet with a girl who is not worldly and mercenary nowadays. Besides which, it is sure to come all right. You'll have her in the end."

"Yes, I mean to, if I can."

Lord Denzil laughed. "Then I may expect to have her for a daughter-in-law some day, knowing your proverbial tenacity of purpose? And as the matter is settled so far, I may as well tell you that, personally, I should like no one better. She is really a lovely girl; she's been very well educated, and is by no means stupid; and last, but not least, unless I am vastly mistaken, she's a good girl: not faultless, of course—if she were she would not be as charming as she is—but high-principled, and so on. No, on the whole, I don't think you could do better. But if you mean to have her, you had better make haste about it, or she'll be carried off by someone else. My advice is, keep the whole thing close, and whenever you can, flirt with some other woman under her nose. Good-bye; the train's going;" and off bustled Lord Denzil, murmuring to himself. "Shocking marriage for Oliver, but nice girl! very nice girl!"

All this had happened four months ago, during which time the Denzils had been at Denzilstone, and with them Richmond. That young man found his present life on the whole very pleasant, notwithstanding that Minnie bored him rather, although her money had a very contrary effect. For he had found a remedy for the boredom, and the remedy was Barbara. To meet her whenever he could manage to do so, in out-of-the-way places where there could be no witnesses, and at the same time to keep Minnie free from suspicion, was a pastime entirely to his mind. That it involved a vast amount of ingenuity, scheming, and falsehood only made it the pleasanter in his eyes. He had a peculiar talent for deception, and to deceive the woman he was going to marry and the woman he professed to love was a never-ending amusement to him through those dull winter months at Denzilstone, adding a zest to his life, such as a piquant sauce lends to an otherwise uninteresting dish. For it was by no means an easy task. Minnie was already jealous and suspicious of Barbara, whilst the latter markedly avoided him, and when she met him was cold and distrustful in manner. Both had to be lulled to confidence, the former by skilful flattery and management, Barbara by a radical change in the tone of his intercourse with her, whilst, at the same time, by adroit

innuendoes, hints, and gentle ridicule, the seeds of distrust and dislike of Oliver should be sown in her mind. The double, or rather threefold, game required an amount of delicacy and ingenuity worthy of a better cause, for although he really admired and preferred Barbara, he had not the slightest intention of giving up Minnie's dollars for her sake, and at the same time he was equally resolved that Oliver should not have the girl he could not marry himself.

And meanwhile, for the last five weeks, the Merivale family had been established at Ditchworth in what was once the Raven ; Mr. Bramley and his wife were at the Vicarage, and the life that Barbara had so much dreaded had begun in earnest. As a rule, our anticipations are far worse than reality, but with Barbara this was not the case. The reality was worse than the anticipation. Mr. Merivale's restraining, refining influence withdrawn, Mrs. Merivale had unquestioned liberty to develop more and more her real self. It was not by any means a bad self. Never did woman mean better, but she had an unfortunate knack of worrying and nagging, which destroyed the comfort of home, and made the up-hill work of making sixpence do duty for a shilling even more disagreeable than it naturally is. Besides which, she was thoroughly angry with her stepdaughter. The softening memory of her illness and her husband's death receding daily more into the distance, Barbara herself fully restored to health, and the fact being assured that she would continue to live with her stepmother and the children, and would devote her money to the maintenance of the family in general, Mrs. Merivale—unconsciously, it is true—grew careless of propitiating her, and began to think that far from doing her utmost for her brothers and sisters, she might, if she had chosen, have done a great deal more. If she had played her cards well, she might have been Mrs. Denzil by now, or, at any rate, allowing for the time of mourning, have been engaged to Oliver ; they might be living at Ditchworth rent free, Charlie might be at school, etc., etc., and Barbara herself in ease and comfort, instead of toiling out in all weathers to give those wretched violin lessons that brought in a mere pittance. These were Mrs. Merivale's thoughts, and being her thoughts, it was no wonder that they coloured her conduct towards her stepdaughter. She was always giving innuendoes, throwing out hints, and otherwise making Barbara's life more wearisome than it need have been, until she looked forward to her lessons as, at any rate, times of comparative peace, and would have dreaded returning home, if it had not been for the children. Fortunately for herself, she was quite strong again. Three weeks at the seaside with one of her Grey uncles had set her up completely, and she had come home brighter and more cheerful, fully resolved to do her duty by her stepmother and the children, and to put her shoulder to the wheel with all her might. And she had kept her resolution. Early and late she toiled at her different occupations, both at home and abroad ; her fame as a mistress grew, new pupils sprang up on all sides, in spite of her announcement that after Christmas she intended raising her terms, and her hands were more than full. If Lady Denzil had asked her, she could not have given her afternoons to Denzilstone, as she had formerly ; they were all taken up. But Lady Denzil did not ask her. The old happy relations with the "House" were things of the past, buried with a good deal of other happiness, so much so that when she paid a formal visit to thank Lady Denzil for all her kindness during her illness, her hostess was nervous and ill at ease, whilst Minnie's frigidity amounted almost to insolence. As we have said before, meekness was not one of Barbara's conspicuous virtues, and she returned home inwardly vowing that she would not set foot again inside Denzilstone until they asked her : a resolution which she kept, much to Mrs. Merivale's chagrin.

"Why you will never go to Denzilstone now, Barbara, I cannot think," she said one day, as she sat at the window by the fading light, darning an already much darned garment of Jack's. "I really believe it is perversity, because you think it would give me a little pleasure."

"No, mother dear, it's not perversity," Barbara answered gently. "First of all, I have no time to go ; secondly, Lady Denzil does not want me ; and thirdly, as the house is always full of company, I do not care to go as long as I am in deep mourning."

"You are so dreadfully selfish, Barbara ; you only think of your own feelings, forgetting all the advantages we derive from your keeping in with the Denzils. As to the company, just a few people staying in the house, it is not like gaiety ; and it is all nonsense Lady Denzil not wanting you. You know she is very fond of you. No ; it is all selfishness."

Barbara did not answer. She could not tell Mrs. Merivale that, apart from other reasons, nothing would induce her to go to Denzilstone as long as Richmond was there ; she had quite enough work to do in avoiding him when she went to give her lessons, without seeking his stronghold. Nevertheless, she could not help meeting him occasionally, when, to her relief, she found that his temporary madness seemed to have passed away, and he was once more his old pleasant, familiar, charming, and yet not alarming self. It was in vain that, remembering as she did remember, that he had behaved falsely to her, she would try on these occasions to pass him with a cold bow ; he would have none of it, and she would find herself compelled to walk a little way with him when he was going in the same direction, lulled to security by his commonplace conversation, yet all the time angry with herself that the old charm was still so potent.

And thus the days passed on until it had come round to Christmas Eve. It was true Christmas weather. Frost and ice were reigning supreme ; snow was daily predicted, the roads were like iron, and skating was the order of the day. Barbara was enjoying the comparative leisure of the Christmas holidays, giving herself up to her small brothers and taking them out and about, whilst Mrs. Merivale devoted herself to the Christmas dinner, a task in which her soul delighted, rendered easy to her by the abundance of Christmas cheer which had arrived from Denzilstone.

Barbara often secretly wondered how it was, considering that Lady Denzil was so different from what she had been towards them, that the flow of game, fruit, flowers, etc., continued unabated. She could only conclude that a standing order had been given either by Lord Denzil or Oliver to the gamekeepers and gardeners, which had never been rescinded. Personally, particularly in view of Lady Denzil's and Minnie's present attitude, she would have liked to decline these gifts, but, fortunately for her family, she was not housekeeper, and Mrs. Merivale had no such foolish feelings. She accepted the gifts sent her without inquiring as to the sentiments of the donors; and was, on this Christmas Eve, rejoicing in the fact that the Denzilstone turkey was a peculiarly plump bird, that would do credit to her treatment.

She was therefore grateful to Barbara for carrying off the boys and baby, who had cried to go, to the pond on Centrewood Common, where the less-favoured inhabitants of the village were disporting themselves on skates; whilst all "the quality" had repaired to Denzilstone, where there were grand doings going on: bonfires and bands, eating and drinking, to which delectable entertainments the Merivales had not been asked. Barbara would not have gone if she had been invited, seeing that it was such a gay affair; but she felt, nevertheless, sore and hurt at being omitted. A year ago they could hardly have anyone to tea without Barbara to assist, and now——well, it was the way of the world, she supposed; but Oliver could certainly not be at home for Christmas, or there would have been no such neglect. And then it suddenly flashed upon her that probably Oliver was the very cause of Lady Denzil's coldness to her. Perhaps she had guessed his secret—he had never told it, of that she felt sure—and naturally did not approve of his choice; how glad, how thankful she was that she had refused him; she would rather drudge away all her life than marry into a family where she was not welcome.

It was cold work up at the pond for her; she had no spirits for skating on this, her first Christmas Eve without her father, so she kept baby moving, giving her little slides to keep her warm, and occasionally confiding her to the boys' care for a run across the pond. But less than an hour of this work was enough for that spoilt little person; the pond was crowded with a not over-select assembly—there was no other good piece of water within reach, except the lake at Denzilstone—and baby, having cannoned against a little boy, whose social standing was not to her fancy, insisted on going home.

"Me not tay, Bab," she said, with great dignity. "Tommy Pitt pussed aganthit me, and Tarlie thaid 'Neber mind'; tho me do home."

This attitude was better than tears, and as Barbara quite agreed with baby, the two began to wend their way homewards, after many injunctions to the boys not to be too late. It was a long way back to Ditchworth, and baby's little legs would never have been able to accomplish it if it had not been for her mail-cart, Oliver's last present to her.

Barbara was racing her down the hill in it; both were rosy and laughing, exhilarated by the keen cold air, when they suddenly came upon Lord Denzil, walking along at a brisk pace in the direction they were going. Barbara had not seen him for months, both he and she were busy people; and as she approached him she began to wonder whether he, too, were offended with her for some inexplicable reason, as was Lady Denzil. Her fears, however, were soon set at rest.

"Well, Miss Barbara," he cried, as he arrested the course of the mail-cart, "you make a first-rate nursery-maid. I am glad to see you looking so much better than you did. Why, I believe it is months since we met. How is it you are not up there to-day?"—pointing in the direction of Denzilstone. "There are all manner of high jinks going on there."

Barbara coloured. "Lady Denzil knows I don't go anywhere," she answered, after a slight pause, uncomfortably conscious that Lord Denzil was scrutinising her narrowly as he walked by her side.

"Oh, ah!" responded his lordship. "Well, you must come another time, when we are quieter. And so I understand that you are getting on famously, and that no young lady's education about here is considered complete unless she has had violin lessons of Miss Merivale."

She laughed. "I have plenty of pupils," she said; "and I am growing so conceited that I am going to raise my terms after the Christmas holidays."

"Quite right. Your work seems to agree with you. You don't look the ghost you did when I last saw you."

"Oh, no; I am quite strong and well now, since I went to Folkestone, and this cold dry weather suits me so well."

"I should not mind it if it did not stop hunting. And then, to think that over in Ireland it is warm and muggy! I heard from Oliver this morning." He looked her full in the face as he said it, but she did not change colour.

"Then he isn't with you for Christmas?" she asked tranquilly.

"No; I am sorry to say he can't get away. Bad time in Ireland just now. I wish Oliver were out of the place."

"But he is very fond of it, isn't he?" she asked. "He told me he liked an up-hill game;" and then she coloured slightly.

"Ah yes, he does; it puts him on his mettle, and," he added significantly, "he usually wins it. But this Irish business is not his own game, it is someone else's, he being at present only a subordinate; added to which, I am not altogether sure that he quite understands the Irish temper. Well, I suppose we must part here," as they came to four cross-roads. "That little thing looks well"—pointing to baby. "The 'Raven' seems to suit you both. How do you like it?"

"Oh, immensely! It is a perfect little place, I think; and so pretty and convenient, and such a sweet little garden."

"Holmes tells me that Oliver fussed over it like any

old woman. He had a pile of letters so high"—holding his hands a quarter of a yard apart—"from him on the subject."

Barbara laughed, and coloured again. "Mr. Denzil was most kind," she said, "in giving in to all our fads and fancies. I am afraid we gave him no end of trouble; but it is certainly a most charming little house. You have seen it, of course?"

"No, I haven't."

"Do come and see it one day, won't you?" she said shyly. "Mother will be so delighted to show it to you."

"Well, I will come some day. I am very busy just now. Good-bye;" and off strode Lord Denzil, leaving Barbara to meditate upon his words.

So Oliver was not coming for Christmas. She was surprised to find that she was rather sorry; there were one or two things on which she wished to consult him, and she did not dread his presence nearly so much since she had received two letters from him, written at intervals of about two months apart. For they were very nice, sensible letters; they had not caused her the faintest flutter, not a tiny thrill of excitement; she had read them as coolly as she would have read Lord Chesterfield's, for there was no word of love in them, and yet they had been extremely interesting. She did like that about Mr. Denzil: he talked and wrote to her as to an intelligent woman, who would be as much interested in the drama being enacted in the unfortunate Emerald Isle as he was, and could appreciate the intensely ludicrous incidents that occasionally relieved its monotonous record of trouble upon trouble, and who would read and understand the books he liked. Yes, they were very nice letters, and she should keep them; for he was very clever, and no doubt his life would be written some day, and then they would be valuable. Perhaps, however, it would be kinder to the public if she burnt them. Biographies full of letters, always in horrid small print——

"Oh, Mr. Richmond, how you startled me!" The exclamation was accompanied by a little cry of dismay. Barbara had fancied herself secure this afternoon, thinking of Richmond as chained to the Denzilstone lake, and lo! here he was by her side.

"I am *so* sorry!" he said penitently; "indeed I did not mean to startle you. Hullo, baby, how are you?"

"Me's welly told," answered baby, in reproachful accents.

"Yes, poor little mite!" said Barbara; "I am afraid she is very cold. She gets frozen in her cart and tired if she walks; and I can't carry her very long, she is so heavy."

"Shall I carry you, baby?"

"Oh please, Mr. Richmond, don't think of such a thing," cried Barbara, horrified at the result of her ill-advised words. "It will be out of your way."

"No, not at all. I am going to Ditchworth, and we shall be there directly. Come, baby."

"Tank 'oo," said baby, who was always open to attentions, particularly from the opposite sex, and the next minute she was in Richmond's arms, her little legs kept warm inside his great-coat. Barbara walked beside her, her heart all in a flutter. To her this simple action of Richmond's, the kind of thing that Oliver would have done for her, or even for a stranger every day, seemed little short of heroic. How gentle, how kind-hearted he was!

"You are surprised to see me, I know," he said; "but the fact is, there has been an accident on the ice at Denzilstone."

"An accident!" cried Barbara. "I hope not a bad one."

"I hope not; but it was an unfortunate affair. There is a very charming, pretty Australian girl staying with Lady Pinxton—I must tell you the whole Pinxton party came over in great force to lunch and skate—and to cut a long story short, she and Monty Brudenell were very silly and foolhardy, and would skate over forbidden spots, until they finally both of them went in. As you may imagine, there was a dreadful scene. Lady Pinxton went into hysterics; the poor girl was fished out, and looking more dead than alive, and Monty after her, and I rode as hard as I could into Centrewood for Prince. In the village I met one of the Denzilstone grooms. I handed him over the horse, and am walking back to keep myself warm. It is an awful bore for the Denzils. Lord Denzil was obliged to go out, or he would never have allowed these tricks to be played on the ice."

"Yes, it is most unfortunate," said Barbara. "But, Mr. Richmond, you must not please carry baby any further, for you are going out of your way. You ought to have turned off at the sign-post."

"No; for I am going to Ditchworth. Mrs. Charlton knows of a nurse somewhere about here, and I want to get her address."

"Then you ought to have kept your horse."

"No, for there is no great hurry; and I prefer walking this Arctic weather."

"You have never told me the young lady's name."

"A Miss Parton, from Sydney; an awfully jolly nice girl, and did not at all deserve a ducking. If Lord Denzil had been there, wouldn't Monty have caught it!"

"It was certainly a great pity he was out. I should think he was a man no one would disobey in a hurry."

"No, indeed. You see, I could not be everywhere at once, in all parts of that large lake. If Oliver had been at home it would have been different, but he wrote this morning to say he can't come;" and Richmond smiled a peculiar smile that Barbara could not understand.

"So Lord Denzil told me just now," she said; "he has so much to do at this time of year. I met him—Lord Denzil I mean—" she explained, "about half-an-hour ago; he was then on his way to Denzilstone."

"Oh, that's all right; he'll be there by this time. Yes, I dare say Oliver has a good lot to do; but it is my opinion that he could get away if he chose."

"And why should he not choose? You mean he is too interested in his work?"

Again Richmond smiled enigmatically.

"He is very much interested in something; I won't

undertake to say it is his work. Just now his letters home are very full of the distressed Irish ladies. Lady Denzil and Minnie are overwhelmed with articles of their manufacture, which are sent over for them to dispose of. Her ladyship cuts the Gordian knot by buying them all herself, which is what I suppose her ingenious son intends her to do. At any rate, distressed or not, they are apparently very absorbing."

"And you think, then, that Mr. Denzil spends Christmas at Dublin for the distressed Irish ladies' sake?"

The question was distinctly crude, thought Richmond, if it was not intended to be satirical, wanting in Barbara's usual pretty grace. Yet the girl had asked it in all good faith, gathering that such was the case from Richmond's assertions. He smiled pityingly.

"I won't say that he spends Christmas there for the sake of the collective Irish ladies, for I fancy most of them are old and ugly, and uninteresting in the extreme; but some of them are young and pretty—Irish women are very fascinating, you know—and there is notably a lovely young widow, whose name recurs very frequently in the letters. But all this is highly uninteresting to you. You want to hear about the accident, don't you?"

"Ye-es. I do hope Miss Parton will not be much the worse."

"I think not. Lady Pinxton vowed she was dead, and for that reason went into hysterics; but she wasn't, you know. Yes, baby, we are just there. Now I shall put you down, and you can run."

Then turning to Barbara. "Don't say anything about Oliver's widow either at home or at Denzilstone," he said in a stage whisper. "I think they are all very annoyed about it; but you know he is an awkward customer, and if he once gets the bit between his teeth——" a gesture finished the sentence.

"Of course I should not think of saying anything," said Barbara, a queer feeling of disappointment making itself felt somewhere in the region of her heart. Were all men double-faced? she wondered, just as they reached Mrs. Charlton's.

"Here I am afraid we must part," said Richmond. "You have been kinder to me this morning, little Barbara," taking her hand and pressing it, "than I have known you to be since I incurred your displeasure. Don't be cruel, Barbara," as she withdrew her hand violently, and the hot colour mounted to her cheeks.

"SHE KEPT BABY MOVING" (*p.* 643).

"I am Miss Merivale, if you please, Mr. Richmond." The words were cold, but her voice trembled.

"Not to me, never to me," he answered. "I always think of you as Barbara."

"I cannot prevent your thoughts," she said hotly; "but I can, and I will, prevent your addressing me as I do not choose to be addressed; and to you I am, and always shall be, Miss Merivale." He could see her eyes sparkling through her veil, the faint colour in her cheeks. How lovely she looked! The next moment she had caught hold of baby's hand.

"Come, baby," she said, "we are close at home; let us run. Thank Mr. Richmond for carrying you."

"Tank 'oo, Mitter Ritsmon," said baby gratefully. A minute later, and he was standing alone, whilst the clang of an iron gate told him that Barbara had reached her home.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

A CONCERT AT DENZILSTONE.

"YOUR daughter: is she at home, Mrs. Merivale?"

It was Miss Denzil, speaking in her cold measured

voice, as she sat, for the first time since her return from London last summer, in Mrs. Merivale's little drawing-room. But Mrs. Merivale was not to be frozen by Miss Denzil, who, after all, was going to make such a very poor marriage, charming though Mr. Richmond was.

"No, Miss Denzil," she said cheerfully. "I am sorry to say she is out."

"I have brought a note from my mother," continued Minnie, in her monotonous drawl. "She wants her to play at our afternoon concert on the 30th. We thought that if she were a success it might lead to other engagements of the same nature, which would probably be more remunerative than teaching."

"You and your family are too kind!" cried Mrs. Merivale, with enthusiasm. "I will answer for Barbara that she will come, and I flatter myself that her playing is sure to be a success. Kontski—the great violinist, you know—was staying with the Parrys the other day, and he was delighted with her, and suggested she should go to London. I am not sure that she is not turning the idea over in her mind, but she is very reticent; she tells me very little," and Mrs. Merivale heaved a sigh which seemed to indicate that no one knew what she had to put up with from her stepdaughter.

"Indeed!" said Minnie, suppressing a yawn. "A pity she does not go."

"So I think; but Barbara is very decided, and likes to go her own way, so I never offer an opinion—never—why!" changing her voice and manner, "there she is. I forgot that she usually comes home earlier on Tuesdays. Barbara," she called out, "here is Miss Denzil kindly come to see us."

Barbara came into the room coolly enough; she did not feel at all overwhelmed by the honour of Minnie's visit, and wondered why she had come. Miss Denzil, on her part, greeted her with a patronising smile, and extended two fingers.

"How d'ye do, Barbara?" she said carelessly. "I have brought a note from my mother for you. We have got a musical afternoon gathering on the 30th, an *olla podrida* of everyone within twelve miles, interesting and uninteresting, town and county, and we want you to play. Here's the note; you will see what it says."

Barbara took the missive and read it. The honorarium mentioned was a large one. She flushed a little as she answered.

"I am afraid I cannot come, Miss Denzil. I do not go anywhere just now."

"Nonsense, Barbara!" put in Mrs. Merivale. "I have accepted for you. How can you be so ungrateful?"

"Indeed I did not intend to be ungrateful," she answered, turning to Minnie. "I know how kind Lady Denzil is, but——"

"Do just as you like," said Miss Denzil nonchalantly; "only allow me to say that I think you are very silly."

"Silly!" cried Mrs. Merivale. "It's not silliness, Miss Denzil: it's downright wicked, perverse pride and——" Barbara held up her hand slightly—such a pretty white hand, as Minnie had observed before now.

"Do not say anything more, mother," she interposed gently. "I will go. Will you please tell Lady Denzil so?" she continued, turning to Minnie; "and I will write her a note. It was so kind of her to think of me."

"And how is Mr. Denzil?" put in Mrs. Merivale abruptly, anxious to get off the subject now Barbara had accepted, and rather ashamed of her late ebullition. "He seems quite a stranger to Centrewood now."

"He is very well," responded Minnie, more frigidly than ever, and looking at Barbara as she spoke. "Naturally, he does not give much thought to Centrewood, being quite absorbed in his work. He is now deeply interested in the poor Irish ladies, and one of them—a Mrs. Reilly, whose husband was murdered last year—is coming to stay with us directly. We hear from my brother that she is very charming and very pretty. You will see her at the concert, Barbara," she concluded, with a certain triumphant ring in her voice which struck Mrs. Merivale unpleasantly.

"Yes," said Barbara calmly. "I remember poor Mr. Reilly's murder. It was in Kerry, wasn't it?"

"I forget where it took place," said Minnie, rising from her seat. "I must be going now," she continued. "I am to tell my mother, then, that you will come?" turning to Barbara. "And, by the way, please don't be too classical. Let us have some light music, and remember your bucolic audience;" and with a very patronising smile Minnie rounded her arm to the right angle of fashionable contortion, and shook hands coldly with the two women. Mrs. Merivale breathed more freely when the door had closed behind her.

"Who would think," she cried, "that she is Mr. Denzil's sister?"

"Yes, who indeed?" responded Barbara, still smarting from Minnie's cold, deliberate gaze. "She is odious!" she added energetically.

"She's not a bit like dear Mr. Denzil," said Mrs. Merivale mournfully. "Barbara," she added, "who is this widow, this Mrs. Reilly?"

"I know no more about her than you do, mother. I remember that at the time of the murder it was said that she was very young and pretty, poor thing! I am going to find the boys now; tea is ready."

The 30th of January arrived in due course of time, and with it the entertainment at Denzilstone. It was to be a very grand affair. Everyone from twenty miles round was invited, and under other circumstances Barbara would have enjoyed it immensely, having a very happy and wholesome pleasure in the society of her fellow-creatures. But as it was, she shrank from it for three reasons: the first being Richmond's presence, a presence which both fascinated and repelled her, and was always perturbing, although she was quite aware that, in such a crowd, she could keep him easily at bay; secondly, the repugnance she felt to going to such an entertainment so comparatively soon after her father's death; and

lastly, the fact that her collaborateurs were all of them professionals of the first rank, whose august presence might be the cause of her failure instead of her success.

She felt both shy and nervous as, accompanied by Charlie and Bob, kindly invited by Lord Denzil, she was ushered into the big hall, where the guests were assembling. There in the doorway, receiving the company for her mother, to whose couch they were then passed on, was Minnie, elaborately dressed, and looking handsome but dull, and by her side, with his most winning smile on, and radiantly well-pleased, Richmond. To both Barbara gave a cold timid little hand, which was barely taken by Minnie, and gently pressed by Richmond.

"Ah! Charlie, my man, I'm glad to see you," he exclaimed genially, as he caught sight of the two boys, looking solemn and shy. "You and I will make acquaintance with the ices before long, won't we? Miss Merivale, where is the precious fiddle? In the cloak-room, eh? Then I will fetch it for you when your turn comes. Now I must take you to Lady Denzil; she is in the corner by the window;" and, promising to return to Minnie in a second, Richmond made a way for Barbara through the crowd, turning round to address her in a low voice when out of Miss Denzil's ken.

"You do not look yourself," he said gently. "You are nervous, are you not? You need not be; there is not one violinist amongst all those people," glancing towards the piano. "There are vocalists, pianistes, a harpist, but you are the sole violin. Does that comfort you?"

Barbara felt her heart beating impetuously. Richmond was his old self, not impertinent and admiring, but gentle, sympathetic, charming.

"Oh yes, it does," she said, just as they reached Lady Denzil's sofa.

It was surrounded by a bevy of friends and acquaintances, conspicuous amongst them a slight fair woman dressed in widow's mourning, with china blue eyes, and a rose-leaf complexion that did not altogether harmonise with a firmly-set mouth and unusually resolute jaw. It was a handsome and uncommon face, and Barbara guessed at once that it belonged to Mrs. Reilly, Oliver's friend. Behind her, looking rather bored, sat Lady Pinxton, and standing by her side, talking to a young man, a tall nice-looking girl, with a bright cheery face, that broke into a smile as Richmond approached. Intuition told Barbara that this was Miss Parton, the young lady from Sydney, the owner, so it was reported, of fabulous wealth, and the dear friend and constant companion of Lady Pinxton.

"Ah, Barbara!" said Lady Denzil, with something of her old warmth of manner, as the girl came up to her. "So here you are at last. You are a little bit late, and I was afraid you were not coming. Let me introduce you to my friend Mrs. Reilly. Mrs. Reilly, this is our young violinist, Miss Merivale."

Mrs. Reilly turned her blue eyes on Barbara—strange eyes they were, with a curious far-off look in them, as though they were gazing at some vision: altogether, a tragic face.

"I think I have heard Mr. Denzil speak of you," she said in a dull toneless voice, as she took Barbara's proffered hand, then dropping it immediately, she once more turned her gaze towards the door, becoming apparently oblivious of her recent introduction. There was, however, no lack of kind greeting on all sides for Barbara. She was a general favourite. Her beauty, her pretty manners, and her more sterling qualities, the braveness with which she had buckled to to help support her little brothers and sister, had all told in her favour, whilst her talent for the violin made her in a small way a person of importance, to be sought after and made much of. Thus she found kindly hands extended to her on all sides, whilst Mrs. Parry, who was to accompany her on the piano when it came to her turn, took her by the hand, and plunging into that magic circle round the piano, introduced her to the celebrated Madame Bolzer, who made her sit down by her side, and talked to her in genial broken English.

Barbara's spirits rose; one *bête noire* of the entertainment had disappeared; no fear of Richmond in this crowd; Charlie and Bob, too, were conducting themselves in an exemplary manner in a corner with George Parry; and lastly, the great Madame Bolzer condescended to tell her that she had heard of her playing from her friend Mrs. Parry.

"But you must practise, mademoiselle," she said; "practise, practise, practise, if you mean to become one of us." Barbara had no time to answer before there was a general move, and the concert began.

Richmond was here, there, and everywhere, acting master of the ceremonies to perfection, and earning golden opinions from everyone. Barbara could not look up without seeing his handsome face, his tall, erect figure; and how she despised herself for her intense consciousness of his presence for that thrill that ran through her every time she caught a glimpse of his soft violet eyes. And when at last it came to her turn to stand up and face that crowd of people, many of them personal friends, to feel, rather than see, those many pairs of foreign eyes fixed upon her, it was still of Richmond she was thinking.

"Courage, Barbara!" whispered Mrs. Parry, who did not know what nervousness meant. "Why, you are as white as a sheet."

"Oh, I shall be all right," whispered Barbara, as she tuned her violin, "when I have once begun;" and she spoke truly, for the very grasp of her fiddle inspired her with confidence. Hers was no mere mechanical talent; her instrument was like a part of herself, had been so ever since she had taken her first lesson, when she was seven years old; and with the opening notes that her bow elicited her nervousness disappeared, and she forgot everything but what she was doing. In obedience to the Denzil wishes, she had chosen something light, suitable to the bucolic audience, as Minnie had somewhat insolently termed the whole county, the major part of whom went to London as much as Miss Denzil herself; but although light, it

was good music, and she was rewarded by an outburst of applause. She stood with her little head erect, hearing the clapping both in front and behind her, and yet only conscious of Richmond leading it, until Mrs. Parry whispered to her, "Barbara, they want an encore. Play something serious this time; that adagio of Beethoven's." Barbara acquiesced; now she had broken the ice, she did not mind going on, and soon the soft plaintive notes stole over the room, wrapping the company in a solemn hush, reflected on Barbara's sympathetic face. There was a yet louder tempest of applause when she ceased this time, until she slipped away from her desk, and was about to take refuge near Lady Denzil's sofa, when she felt her skirts pulled in no gentle fashion. She turned round to find that Madame Bolzer was her assailant. The good-natured prima donna's wide, ugly, but intelligent countenance was beaming with pleasure.

"Ah! but, Miss Merivale," she exclaimed, "you deed not tell me that you had talent, genius. My friend Mrs. Parry spoke highly of you, but to tell the truth, I deed not quite believe her. I know what amateurs are; and with the poor violin in these days, Himmel! how it is tortured, the poor instrument, particularly here in England, where every leetle schoolmees belabours it. But with you! Ah, my dear mademoiselle, you have the real thing, the *feu sacré*, and I tell you with truth it has been a great pleasure to me to leesten to you. I did not think it would be."

"Thank you, madame," said Barbara, with shining eyes, as the voluble foreigner paused. "It is so kind of you to say so."

"But you must go on practise, practise. Ah! is not that the master of the house who wants to speak to you?" It was indeed Lord Denzil.

"Miss Barbara," he said, leaning unceremoniously across the piano, "I have been asked to drag you from your retirement, and launch you amongst your friends. Will you come?"

"Will you excuse me, madame?" asked Barbara, turning to Madame Bolzer.

"Yes, certainly, of course. Go to your friends, and later you must come back and talk to me."

"There is an ovation in store for you," said Lord Denzil. "Everyone is telling me you are a genius. Now, here you are. There is Mrs. Beckwith, who has the first claim on you, as she sent me to fish you out from amongst the foreigners."

It was not only Mrs. Beckwith, but a dozen other people who wanted to speak to Barbara, some of whom she knew, and some strangers from many miles off. In one moment she had become a "personage"; she was made much of, flattered, and caressed enough to turn her head, if there had not suddenly stolen upon her that terrible sense of desolation which comes to those who have lost one dear to them when they mix with the gay world before they are in tune with it. Barbara listened to all the compliments and praises with a sense of depression that robbed them of their bad effects, thankful to escape at last, and go in search of Bob and Charlie, to see what they were doing.

"Look here, Bab," said Bob, when she had unearthed him in the dining-room, engaged on his fourth ice, "don't you come and bother us. We're all right. Lord Denzil told us we might eat as many ices as we liked. You go back and play to the company, and you will make your fortune. I heard Colonel Parry say so. I say, will you buy me a real good fishing-rod when you have made it?"

"Certainly, Bob, I will," she answered, laughing. "But, meanwhile, I can't let you eat too many ices. If you and Charlie get tired, you can go home, you know; but you must not remain here to stuff."

"All right, Bab," said Charlie. "You go back to the drawing-room, that's a good girl."

Barbara could not help laughing as she proceeded to obey him, more especially as she did not wish to lose one note of the music that was going on. In order to return to the drawing-room she had to pass through a corridor where there was a charming little nook, cleverly draped and shrouded by Richmond in Eastern fashion, from whence proceeded the murmur of voices. The place was only arranged to hold two, and Barbara at once recognised one of the voices, low-pitched though it was. How often had she listened to those same soft whispering tones! How often had they thrilled her through and through! Who the lady was she could not see, but instinct told her that it was not Minnie; the next moment, and a fold of dark green material lined with red came into sight, which she recognised as belonging to Miss Parton's dress. But the crowd was pushing her onwards to the drawing-room; she could not, nor did she, linger to see or hear more. Somehow she felt sick at heart, for although there was nothing very wonderful in two people seating themselves to converse for a few minutes in that most inviting little niche, still, seeing who the parties were, it gave her a feeling of uneasiness, which was only at last dispelled by Madame Bolzer's exquisite singing.

Thus the afternoon wore away, until it came round to Barbara's turn to play again, and Richmond appeared to conduct her to her place. He looked a little flushed and excited, and there was a certain expression on his countenance that Barbara knew only too well, and which put her on her guard. Minnie was watching him narrowly, and he knew it; but it was between the parts, and the buzz of conversation was so overpowering that neither she nor anyone else could hear one word he said as he offered Barbara his arm.

"Why have you avoided me all this afternoon, Barbara?" he asked pathetically, as he piloted her to her desk. "Why do I never get a sight of you? What have I done to you that you should be so cruel to me?" The noise in the room was at its loudest; nevertheless, Barbara heard every syllable of the low-toned pleading, and with the fascination that his tones exercised awoke also her scorn.

"Here I am at my stand, Mr. Richmond," she said; then addressing Mrs. Parry, she deliberately turned her back on him, and busied herself ostentatiously with her music.

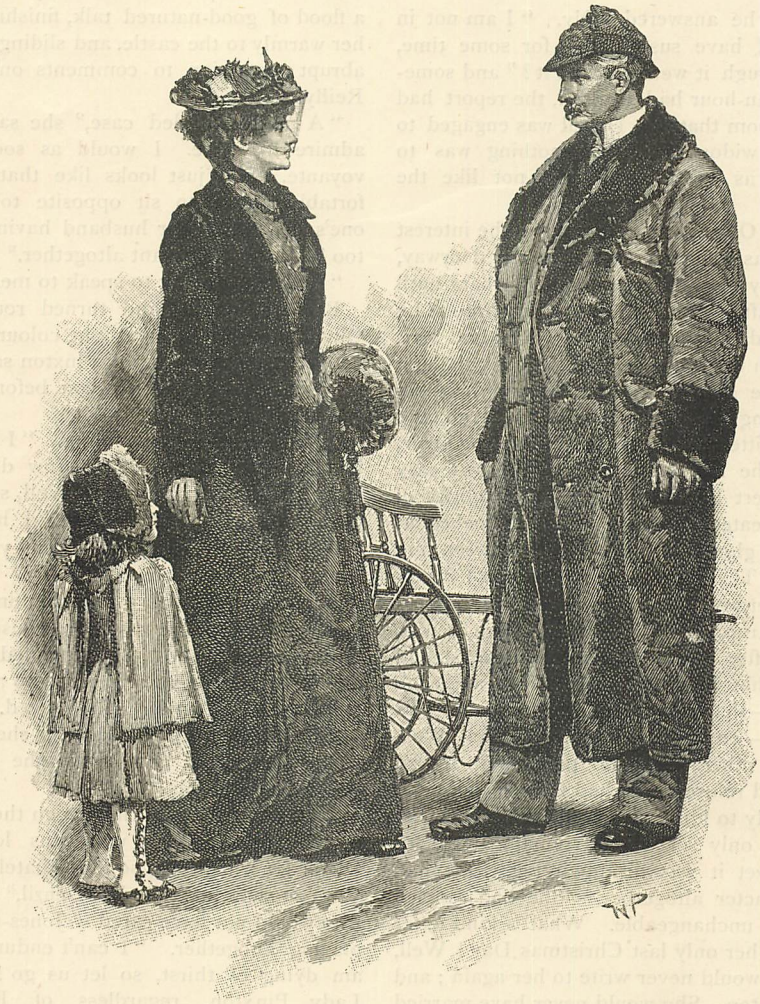
"That is because I am looking at her," thought

Miss Denzil to herself, as she hardened her heart against Barbara. The next minute the notes of the violin rang out clear and startling through the room. Barbara was throwing her answer to Richmond into her instrument. All the scorn, the anger she felt was passing into that tempestuous *presto* she was playing, and he understood it, and inwardly gnashed his teeth. She looked so lovely as she stood up there, the faint colour in her ivory-white cheeks, the flicker of internal fire in her sea-blue eyes, the soft white hand drawing forth those speaking sounds, that Richmond felt a sudden fury seize him as he glanced first at Minnie, and then, as a second thought, at Miss Parton; Minnie so elaborately dressed, so cold and uninteresting; but still not Barbara, not the woman he had loved.

"Unfortunate wretch that I am!" he thought to himself, even as he smiled his sweetest at Lady Pinxton, an old friend of his, who liked nothing so well as having a good-looking young man at her elbow.

"She is really exceedingly pretty," remarked that lady, as though she had just made the discovery of Barbara's beauty. "I must ask her to Pinxton. Harold is so devoted to music, he will be charmed with her."

"I hope you will ask me too, Lady Pinxton," responded Richmond. "It is literally ages since I stayed with you."



"'I CANNOT PREVENT YOUR THOUGHTS,' SHE SAID HOTLY" (*p.* 645).

Lady Pinxton laughed.

"Hush!" she said, "don't go on talking. I want to listen. I like that girl's playing. She has a soul."

There was no doubt that there was plenty of soul in Barbara's playing—rather too much, thought Richmond, as he listened to it, until his attention was arrested by a little commotion near the door. He turned round to see what it was, and there, to his amazement, stood Oliver. At the same moment Mrs. Reilly brushed

past him; in full view of the seated company, within a yard of Barbara's desk, making her way to Mr. Denzil. The action was so conspicuous, that no one in the room could fail to notice it. Barbara saw it as she was playing the concluding chords to that tumultuous *presto*, and commented inwardly on it. "They must be engaged," she thought to herself, as she commenced an *andante*, whilst Richmond smiled with glee.

"Is it a case?" Lady Pinxton was asking him in a whisper.

"I don't know," he answered softly. "I am not in his counsels, but I have suspected it for some time, and it looks as though it were, doesn't it?" and somehow, before half-an-hour had elapsed, the report had spread over the room that Mr. Denzil was engaged to the pretty Irish widow, but that nothing was to be said about it, as Lord Denzil did not like the match.

And meanwhile, Oliver, quite unaware of the interest he had evoked, was standing calmly in the doorway, with Mrs. Reilly by his side, listening to Barbara until she had finished, after which he was pounced upon by relations and friends, until in desperation he and Mrs. Reilly retired to an unoccupied room, without giving a thought to all the gossip and conjecture their behaviour was stirring up. Barbara saw them go, and smiled somewhat bitterly. She had not spoken to Oliver; on the contrary, she had avoided him. It was easy enough at a concert like this, where the majority of the guests were seated, nor had she even looked at him after that one glance at the meeting between him and Mrs. Reilly. There was a vague feeling of disappointment, of bitterness, at her heart; she had always thought Oliver so true, so reliable, and yet here he was, less than a year after vowing to her that he should always love her, that he would wait for her, as Jacob waited for Rachel—that was twice seven years, and this was seven months—engaged to another woman. Well, he was only like other men, and perhaps it served her right. She had refused him, had thrown him over, behaved shamefully to him; how could she expect that he, Lord Denzil's only son, should remain single for her sake? And yet it was disappointing. She had misread his character altogether. She had fancied him so strong and unchangeable. What a kind letter he had written to her only last Christmas Day! Well, of course now he would never write to her again; and a very good thing too. She would never have married him, and the sooner all communication between them ceased, the better; and yet she sighed. Perhaps it was that she had wanted to consult him about a matter that was troubling her just now; his judgment was so good, so calm; but of course he would be taken up with Mrs. Reilly, and have no time or interest to give to her affairs; and then she sighed once more. Her reverie, lulled by a rather dismal performance on the piano, was interrupted by the applause that ensued, and by Richmond.

"Lady Pinxton wants to be introduced to you," he said. "Do you mind coming to where she is sitting? She knew your grandmother, Mrs. Grey."

"Did she?" asked Barbara, with shining eyes, and forthwith followed him a yard or two further down the room.

Lady Pinxton received her with enthusiasm.

"To think that you should be the granddaughter of that dear, clever Mrs. Grey!" she cried. "And you are very like her, too. Mr. Richmond, fetch another chair; I want Miss Merivale to sit here by me."

Her ladyship was accustomed to be obeyed, and very soon Barbara was seated by her side, whilst between each performance Lady Pinxton poured forth a flood of good-natured talk, finishing up by inviting her warmly to the castle, and sliding from thence by an abrupt transition to comments on Oliver and Mrs. Reilly.

"A most decided case," she said; "but I don't admire his taste. I would as soon marry a clairvoyante. She just looks like that; a most uncomfortable person to sit opposite to all the days of one's life. And her husband having been murdered, too! Very unpleasant altogether."

"Aren't you going to speak to me, Miss Merivale?"

Barbara started and turned round. There was Oliver close beside her. She coloured scarlet. Could he have heard what Lady Pinxton said?

"I have not been near you before this afternoon," she answered.

"No," he answered smiling. "I have been behaving very badly, haven't I? How d'ye do, Lady Pinxton? Shockingly, you say. Well, so I have, but I am come to make amends now. I have only an hour before I return to London. Will you come and have some tea, Miss Merivale?"

Barbara hesitated. On the one hand was that matter on which she wished to consult Oliver; on the other her self-respect, as she called it. She had been fooled by Richmond; was she to allow herself to be fooled by Mr. Denzil? No, indeed.

"No, thank you, Mr. Denzil," she said, and she was quite unaware of how coldly she spoke. "I would rather listen to this."

"This" was a performance on the harp by the celebrated Jones-Griffith, who was looking daggers at Oliver for whispering so immediately in his vicinity.

"You shall take me, Mr. Denzil," said Lady Pinxton, who would not have cared if Jones-Griffith had ceased playing altogether. "I can't endure the harp, and I am dying of thirst, so let us go!" and up jumped Lady Pinxton, regardless of Richmond's gentle "Hush!" as she disappeared with Oliver into the tea-room.

An hour later, and the concert was a thing of the past, and Lord Denzil was searching for his son. He found him at last in the little oriental nook with Mrs. Reilly.

"Run you to earth at last, Oliver!" he exclaimed. "You must be off directly if you don't want to lose your train. The foreigners are desperate to be gone, and are entreating to start in every tongue under heaven. They are all packed into the omnibus. Look sharp! Hope you have finished your business with him, Mrs. Reilly, for he must not wait a minute." Then, as he accompanied his son through the hall, "You

have done just what you ought to to-day," he said; "you really have been very clever."

Oliver stared; he had not a notion what his father meant.

"There, get in," said Lord Denzil impatiently. "Who are you looking for? Barbara Merivale, eh? Oh, she went home a quarter of an hour ago."

"Gone home!" he exclaimed, and meekly got into the omnibus. So Barbara was gone, and he had not exchanged two words with her.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

MRS. REILLY.

THE Denzils did not go up to town this year, as they had the previous one, for the parliamentary season. Lord Denzil liked the hunting; the doctors had unanimously pronounced the quiet of the country the best medicine for Lady Denzil's health; so, in spite of Minnie and Richmond, who would both have preferred London, the family remained on at Denzilstone till May, and with them Mrs. Reilly.

The pretty Irish widow had very quickly become indispensable to the Denzils. Lord Denzil, who hated writing, employed her as his secretary; Lady Denzil soon learnt so to lean upon her that she could hardly move without consulting her; Minnie found that she had unexceptionable taste in dress; in fact, she supplied a want in the family, and was equally acceptable to all its members but Richmond, who called her the vampire, and said she gave him the blues.

The neighbourhood had long ago made up its mind that she was going to marry Oliver when the term of her widowhood should have expired, and to regard it as only natural that when the latter came down from Saturday to Monday from London, as he frequently did, he should spend the greater portion of his time with his fascinating *fiancée*. For that Mrs. Reilly was fascinating there seemed no doubt, in spite of Lady Pinxton's adverse comments on her appearance; at any rate, she had fascinated Mr. Denzil and all his family, and it was perfectly clear that she was very shortly to become altogether one of them.

These were the reports that were flying about, that Barbara heard wherever she went to give her lessons, and that ere long reached Mrs. Merivale's ears, much to her dismay and consternation. Must she a second time demolish her cherished castle in the air, that she had rebuilt only lately with so much care on the foundation of Oliver's weekly visits to the cottage? No, that she certainly would not. Not until she saw him actually married to Mrs. Reilly would she take down one brick from her edifice, or even the flag of victory that she had planted on its summit. Poor Mrs. Merivale! She was a much-tried woman, but she had learnt to be wary with her stepdaughter in these delicate matters, and to hold her tongue, although she was bursting with indignation against Barbara, who, by stupid mismanagement, was always out when Mr. Denzil came to call, and was altogether tiresome and perverse where he was concerned.

But there was very little mismanagement in Barbara's avoidance of Oliver; it was well thought out and premeditated. "A burnt child fears the fire," and as she had burnt her fingers with Richmond, so had she no intention of running that risk with his cousin. Not that she cared for him; oh, no. By all means let him marry Mrs. Reilly, but at the same time, she was not going to afford food for gossip; and, therefore, as he thought it necessary to pay a weekly visit to the cottage, she should take very good care to be out when he came.

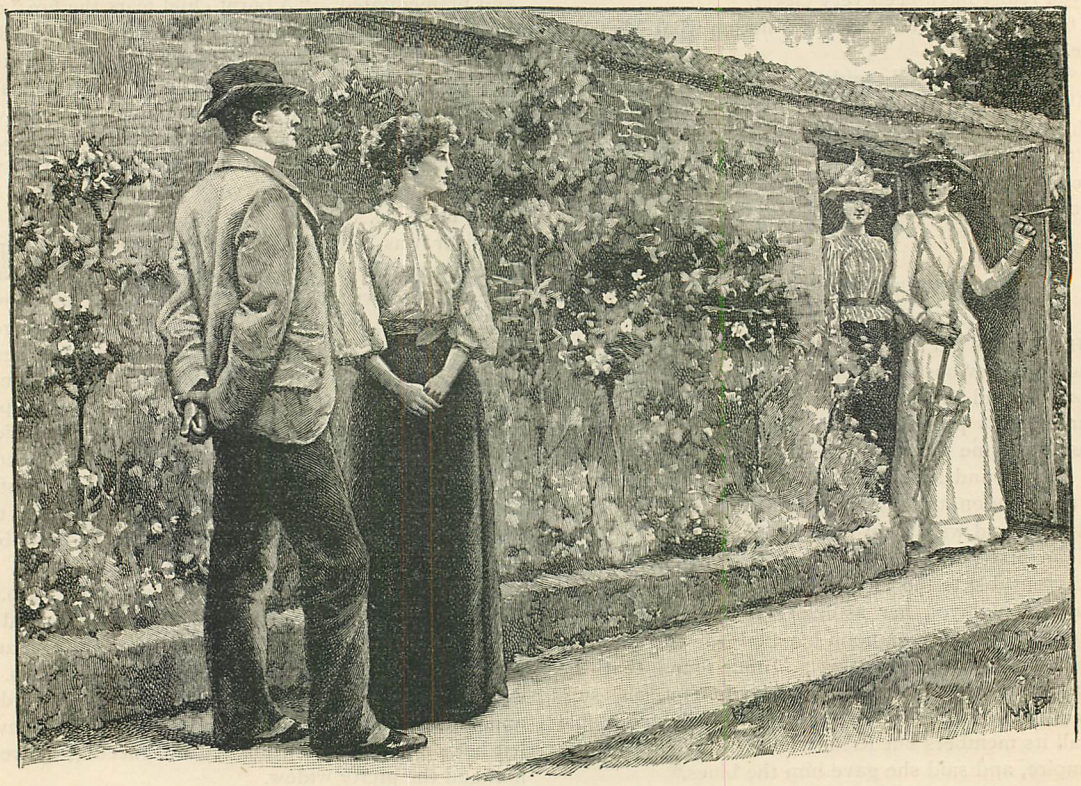
Oliver was bitterly disappointed. He had hoped that during these months, when he was in town and able to run down to Denzilstone, to make some way with Barbara; but, alas! he seemed further off from her than ever. Try as he would, he could never get a word alone with her; and there was a fresh indifference, almost coldness, in her manner towards him that perplexed him sorely. He could not attribute it to Richmond's influence, for he was abroad, personally conducting two old ladies, Lady Tancroft and her sister, through Italy and the Riviera, and writing daily the most charming letters to Minnie, wherein he described himself as absolutely chained to his companions.

And yet, if Mr. Denzil had only known it, Barbara was thinking of him more now than she ever had in her life before; wondering when he was going to marry Mrs. Reilly; feverishly and consciously anxious to avoid him, with all the time that vague feeling of disappointment at her heart about him that had never left her since she had witnessed the meeting between him and the pretty widow.

There was, however, one subject on which she very much wished to consult him, and, seeing that she had no feeling whatever for him, there was no reason in the world why she should not do so. True, she had plenty of friends whose advice she might equally have asked—Judge Thornton, his wife, Mary, the Sandersons, and many others—and yet she clung tenaciously to Oliver, as the one person by whose opinion her stepmother would be guided. Then why not seek it?

She came to this conclusion one Saturday, the very last that he would be in England. The following Monday he was to return to Ireland, where there was, as usual, some kind of political crisis going on, and where his presence was needed without delay. The question was, would he come to see them, or would he devote all his time to Mrs. Reilly? She would stay at home and see. If he came, she would ask his advice; if not, she would let it alone.

Mrs. Merivale was delighted when, on that afternoon, her stepdaughter appeared in the drawing-room towards tea-time without her hat, evidently intending to take that meal at home instead of with friends, as usual. She had the tact, however, to refrain from any remark; and presently, to her joy, Mr. Denzil was announced. Somehow, as he came into the room, he appeared to Barbara in a new light. The *fiancé* of Mrs. Reilly seemed to be quite a different person from Oliver Denzil, in love with herself, Barbara Merivale, who did not return his love in the least. For the first time since she had known him he looked to her less ugly than she had ever thought him; his eyes were



"MINNIE AND MRS. REILLY ENTERED" (*p.* 653).

certainly very good, and his figure by no means bad; and then she fell to wondering how he could care for an uncomfortable woman like Mrs. Reilly, whose face was a tragedy in itself, until her speculations were brought to an abrupt conclusion by his addressing her.

"How d'ye do, Miss Barbara?" he said, with undisguised pleasure. "This is a piece of good luck to find you at home, this, my last Saturday at Denzilstone." Barbara stiffened her back and hardened her heart. The old kindly tones offended her. Why should he be glad to see her: he betrothed to Mrs. Reilly? Was he not behaving to her just as Richmond had behaved? Was he not also false? With a severely grave countenance she answered him.

"Yes," she said, "I am staying at home this afternoon. They have got the measles at the Thorntons', where I often go on Saturdays. Mother," turning to Mrs. Merivale, "it's so warm; shall we have tea in the garden?"

"If you like, my dear," responded Mrs. Merivale, all smiles and acquiescence. Barbara did like, and so did Mr. Denzil and the boys; and soon the table was spread under the big chestnut, where the bees were humming in the warm sunlight, and the buds were big with the promise of blossom; and Barbara was pouring out tea, and dispensing bread and butter and cake with a grace all her own. At least, so thought Oliver as he sat silently watching her; whilst she, on her part, taking it for granted that he was pre-occupied with Mrs. Reilly, was disposed to resent his taciturnity. "I wonder why he comes here at all," she thought to herself. "He had much better stay at home, this, his last day."

Mrs. Merivale too, struck by his silence, was on thorns to put an end to all doubts and misgivings by asking him point-blank whether he were engaged or not; but this she did not dare to do—it would be taking too great a liberty. There was no reason, however, why she should not mention Mrs. Reilly's name, and see how much information she might contrive in this way to pick up.

"Mrs. Reilly is making a long stay at the House, Mr. Denzil, is she not?" she began carelessly, whilst her fingers moved nervously about her dress; and at the question Barbara raised her eyes from the contemplation of the contents of the tea-pot, and waited for the answer.

"Yes," said Mr. Denzil; "she will be with us for some months. My father and mother both like her; she is a very clever woman; and as, poor thing! her nerves were quite shattered by her husband's horrible murder—you know she was with him when it took place—the quiet and rest of Denzilstone have been very soothing to her."

"She is very handsome?" queried Mrs. Merivale: "at least, so I have been told. I have not seen her."

"Very," he answered. "People tell me she was quite beautiful when she first married, five years ago, but that her husband's death has altered her terribly."

"It is a very tragic face," remarked Barbara; "and no wonder. The murderer—I don't know if there was more than one—was never caught, was he?"

"No," he answered, "although Mrs. Reilly saw him distinctly." Then suddenly changing the conversation. "Do you know, Miss Barbara," he said, "I have never once been round this garden with you since you settled here. Mrs. Merivale tells me that you are head gardener. You are certainly a very successful one. You have made the little place uncommonly pretty, and that herbaceous border under the wall is in capital order. Let us go and have a look at it, if you have finished your tea."

Barbara smiled. The garden was her delight, and a subject on which she was very open to flattery. "Oh, I am so glad you like my border!" she cried; "but it will be much prettier in a month or so. Mary Thornton and I arranged it between us, and we did not buy so much as a seed for it. Andrewes sent me such a heap of nice things, and they have all done beautifully. Look what a promise of fruit we have on the wall. It's such a dear little place," she continued warmly. "I am sure we ought to be everlastingly grateful to you, Mr. Denzil, for letting us come here, and making everything so nice for us."

The prettiest of speeches was on the tip of Oliver's tongue, but he refrained himself. He would try the sternly repressive policy just a little longer, and see what it would do for him. To-day it appeared to be working well. "I am so glad you like it," he said. "I really do think Bridges has made a very nice little box of it. Andrewes was quite right to send you things. Mind you never hesitate to ask him for all you want. Half their time they only get thrown away in a big garden like ours. How prettily those tulips are arranged!"

They were standing alone by the border under the wall, Mrs. Merivale having sternly retained the boys and baby by her side. Now was Barbara's time for consulting Mr. Denzil on the point that was weighing on her mind. She must do it quickly, or the children would be upon her.

"Mr. Denzil," she began abruptly, "I want to ask your advice about something."

Oliver turned to her quickly, the light of hope shining in his eyes, but, alas! she did not see him. She was looking down, nervously twiddling a flower between her fingers.

"I shall be only too pleased to give it," he said. "What is it?"

"If—if—" she said, still looking down, and playing with the flower, "there should be an opening—if my friends advise me—to go to London—and come out as a professional—what do you think about it?"

She had raised her eyes now, and was looking him in the face. His heart beat high with hope. Why did she consult him, unless indeed she thought he had a right to be consulted? And yet, on the other hand, would she think of taking up a professional career if there was even a remote contingency of becoming his wife? From his point of view her question was decidedly perplexing. He looked down on the sweet girlish face, with the bloom of the country on cheek and lip, with the open, candid expression in the blue eyes, and tried to picture to himself what she would become in London—as a professional. He was too much a man of his age, and too American, to have any old-fashioned dislike to public women, though deep down in his heart he did not love the race; but he did know that, as a professional violinist, Barbara would probably get mixed up with a set of people, possibly harmless in themselves, yet who would do her no good: who would rob her of her simplicity, who would admire her beauty, and—tell her so. Nevertheless, he would do his best to answer her dispassionately, as he might any casual acquaintance. What right had he to do otherwise?

"It is a difficult question you have asked me," he said at last, "and I hardly know how to answer it. The race for life in London is a hard one, and I doubt whether you would do better there than you do here. To be a real success there, you ought to be a star of the first magnitude; living, house-rent, all that is much dearer, and—— By the way, what do your uncles, the Greys, say?"

"I have not asked them," she answered. "They would be sure to disapprove, and I see you agree with them."

He smiled.

"My approval or disapproval has really nothing to do with it," he answered.

"But suppose your advice coincides with my feelings?" she replied quietly. "Suppose I hate the idea of becoming a professional, and would much rather stay where I am, only that I think it my duty to do so, perhaps, for the sake of the boys?"

"Well, then, why not have asked the Greys' advice?" he answered, laughing.

"Because it would have been of no good. Because ——" and here she stopped and coloured.

"I think I understand," he said gently. "Well, then, if you want my real opinion, I will give it to you. I doubt very much if you would do the boys any good; possibly you might do them harm. I mean that you would lose money instead of making it. My advice to you is to stay where you are, and you may tell it to Mrs. Merivale, for I think that is what you want, don't you?"

She nodded her head.

"Yes," she said; "your opinion is just what I have have felt all along myself. I know, of course, that I can play the violin, and fairly too, but I have never given it the time or the practice that a would-be professional should, and I feel convinced that in London I should be a failure, whereas, down here I am a success. Thank you so much."

She looked up at him gratefully, and he bent his head down low. But just as he was about to speak—and there is no saying what he might not have poured forth—the little gate in the wall close by them opened, and Minnie and Mrs. Reilly entered. There was an unpleasant

sneer hovering round Minnie's lips as she saw her brother and Barbara standing together that made the latter feel hot all over; the next minute Mrs. Merivale had rushed from under the chestnut-tree to welcome the two fresh arrivals with the enthusiasm she displayed to everyone who came from Denzilstone.

"My dear Miss Denzil," she cried, "how good of you to come and see us this very warm day! It is indeed an unexpected pleasure. And this is—I am sure—Mrs. Reilly. I am very glad to make your acquaintance, Mrs. Reilly," she added, turning to the widow. "Come now, and have some tea, won't you?"

"Thanks very much, Mrs. Merivale," said Minnie, her usual drawl accentuated. "We have had our tea. We are come to fetch my brother; it is his last day at home, and my father wants him."

"Wants me?" asked Oliver in surprise, whilst Mrs. Reilly stood motionless as a statue, with that strange far-away look in her eyes, as though she were for ever seeing enacted before her the tragedy of her husband's death.

"Yes," answered Minnie impatiently. "Do you suppose that I should have walked here in this heat unless it were necessary? There has been a telegram, or a letter, or something. At any rate, you are wanted."

Oliver smiled.

"Why did not you send a servant, Min?" he asked good-humouredly, "if you object to the heat?" Then turning to Mrs. Reilly: "*You* should not have walked," he said gently. The tragic face lighted up; something like a smile glimmered in the blue eyes and round the sad mouth.

"I feel strong to-day," she answered, looking at him gratefully.

"Anyhow, you had better ask Mrs. Merivale to give you a cup of tea before you go back," he said. "Remember, you have a good two miles to walk."

"Yes, do have a cup of tea, Mrs. Reilly," said Mrs. Merivale, with a sinking heart. Alas! there could be no doubt as to the truth concerning Oliver's engagement. Was he not only too tenderly interested in this woman with the light blue eyes?

"If Mr. Denzil thinks it necessary, yes, please," she responded, following her hostess to the chestnut-tree, where Minnie was already seated with a look of bored resignation on her face, which would have been ludicrous if it had not been rude.

A shadow had fallen upon them all. Minnie, with her marvellous toilette and her impertinently stony countenance, Mrs. Reilly, with her uncomfortable eyes, were not provocative of conversation. There was a vague feeling of being in disgrace haunting Mrs. Merivale and Barbara, who would fain have followed the boys' and baby's examples, and have disappeared, as they had, at the first approach of these strangers; but, alas! manners demanded that they should sit there and watch Mrs. Reilly drink her tea, and make spasmodic efforts at conversation, heroically supported by Oliver; whilst Minnie looked on with a cold smile on her lips, apparently entirely absorbed in the tassel of her parasol. At last Mrs. Reilly had gulped down her tea, and Oliver rose.

"Since my father is in such a hurry for me," he said, betraying just a little of the annoyance he felt, "we had better go now, Minnie, for we must take it quietly for Mrs. Reilly. Good-bye, Mrs. Merivale; I am sorry to go so early, but you see I am under orders. Good-bye, Miss Barbara." He was looking at her, but Barbara would not look at him. In the presence of that cold stare of Minnie's, and with the knowledge that Lord Denzil—as a rule so kind and friendly to herself—had sent his daughter down to fetch him away, she could be as icy as Miss Denzil herself.

"Good-bye, Mr. Denzil," she said, without even giving him her hand. "I hope you will have a good crossing." The next minute the iron gate had clanged behind the Denzil party, and Mrs. Merivale and Barbara were left facing each other under the chestnut-tree.

"There is no doubt about it, Barbara," said the former, as soon as Oliver was out of earshot, wrath and grief striving together in her countenance. "He is engaged to Mrs. Reilly."

"No doubt at all, I should think, mother."

"And you have the effrontery to look me in the face and say that?" cried Mrs. Merivale, beside herself with anger, "when you know quite well that if you had chosen you might have been in Mrs. Reilly's place, or, better still, married months ago to Mr. Denzil!"

Barbara changed colour. She dreaded her stepmother's outbreaks of wrath more than she would allow to herself.

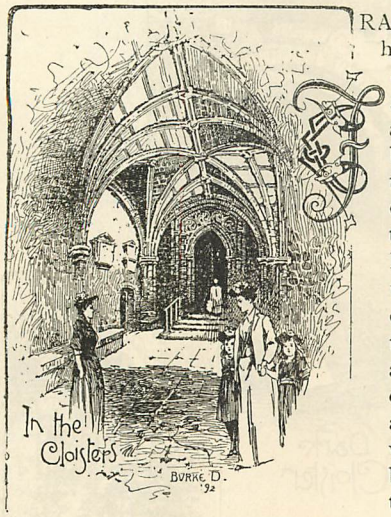
"Dear mother," she said soothingly, "please do not go on like that. I am not married to Mr. Denzil, or likely to be; and if I were, what would you all do without me and my violin lessons?" she continued laughingly. "I'm sure it is a very good thing I am not married, for now that I have secured the Pinxton connection, I think our fortune is made." But Mrs. Merivale refused to be comforted, or to see matters in this light.

"You are a selfish, ungrateful girl, Barbara!" she said. "You never think of a creature but yourself, but there! I will not say more;" and, putting constraint upon herself, Mrs. Merivale hurried away from her stepdaughter's presence, for fear that she should be betrayed into saying more even than she felt. Barbara remained behind, mechanically getting the tea-things together, preparatory to carrying them into the house.

"Yes," she murmured to herself, as she folded up the cloth; "yes, there is no doubt that he is engaged to her, so that chapter is closed for me. I wonder why I feel sorry. I don't care for him an atom. I suppose it is that I like him so much as a friend that I am very sorry he should marry a woman like Mrs. Reilly; and yet, I dare say, if one knew her, that she is very nice, and will make him very happy. At any rate, it is no business of mine;" and with that, Barbara picked up the tray, and, carrying it into the house, retired to her room.

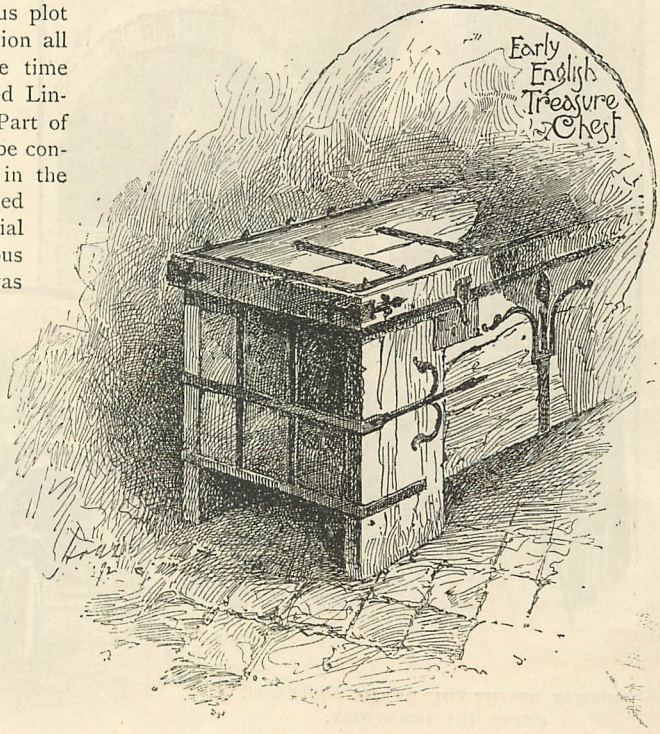
END OF CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

THE CHAPEL OF THE PYX.

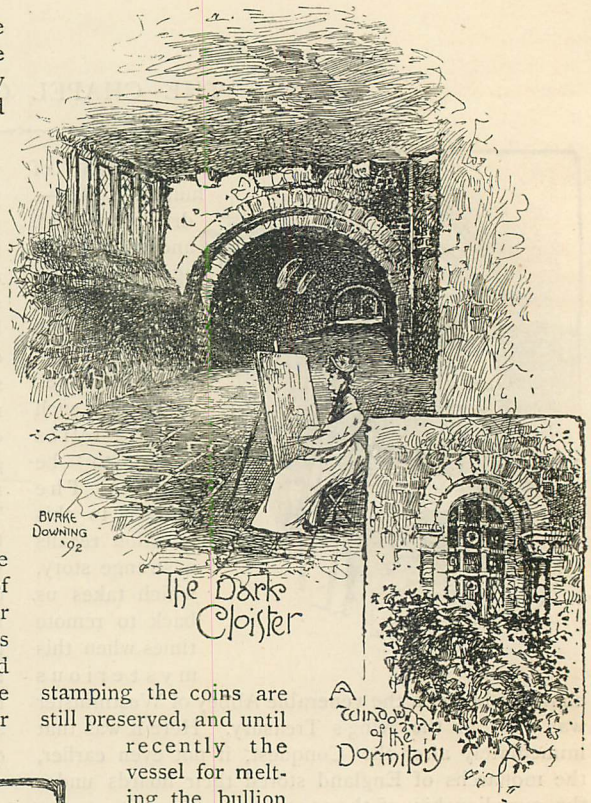


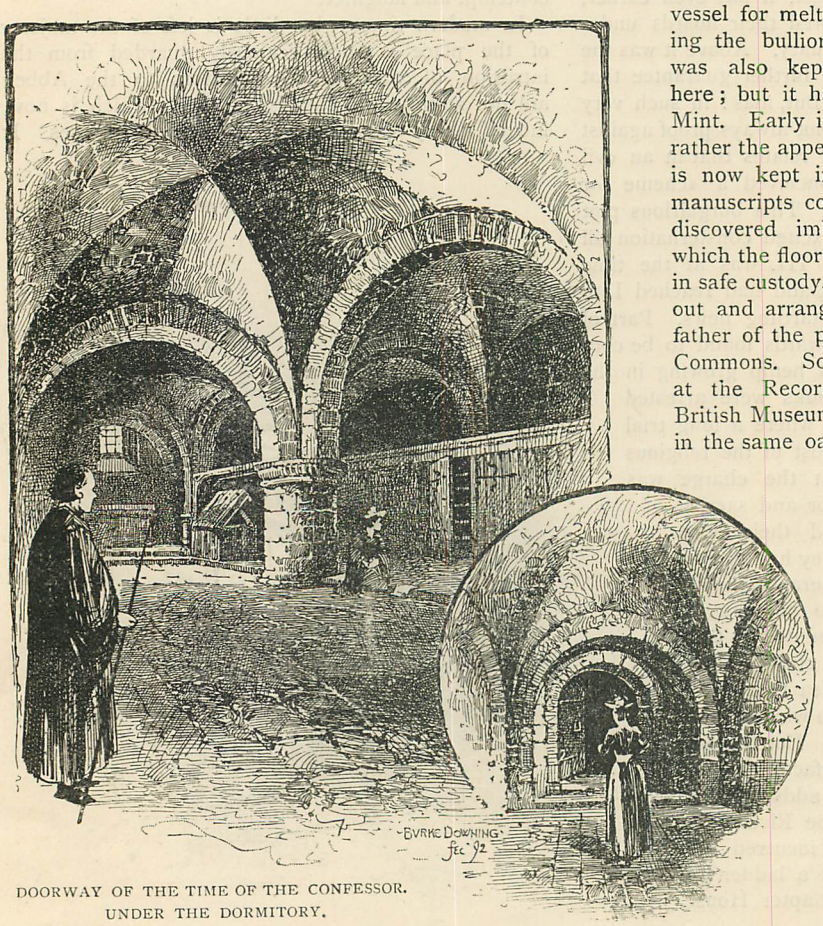
FRAGMENTS of human skin—dried, shrivelled, and soiled with age—may still be seen lining the inside of one of the doors of the Pyx chapel. How did such weird relics come to be there? The answer to this question recalls a strange story, which takes us back to remote times when this mysterious chamber beneath the venerable Abbey of Westminster was used as the King's Treasury. Here it was that immediately after the Conquest, if not even earlier, the monarchs of England stored their hoards under the guardianship of the sanctuary. Above it was the monastic dormitory—surely a further guarantee that the treasure would be safe. But, alas! in such very early times even monks were not always proof against worldly temptations. History relates that in an evil moment several of them conceived a scheme for actually robbing the treasury! This burglarious plot was carried into effect, and excited consternation all over the land. King Henry III. was at the time engaged in his Scottish wars, and had reached Linlithgow when he heard the startling news. Part of the stolen treasure was afterwards found to be concealed amid a thick crop of hemp growing in the cloisters. Eighty of the monks were arrested and conveyed to the Tower, where a long trial followed. The Abbot, and most of the religious fraternity were released, but the charge was brought home to the sub-prior and sacrist. They were flayed alive, and their skins nailed to the door by which they had broken into the sacred chamber—there to remain by way of gruesome warning to the clergy as they paced the cloisters or mounted to their sleeping-place. An ancient chronicler of Westminster repudiates the idea that any of the pious brotherhood were so wicked as to be concerned in the robbery. But the late Dean Stanley held that the facts were too stubborn to be gainsaid. He adds that the chief robber, doubtless, was one Richard de Podlicote, who had already incurred suspicion of having by means of a ladder got through the window of the Chapter House, whence he carried off a considerable quantity of silver plate. In the still more audacious attempt upon the royal treasury, he concerted with some nefarious friends within the precincts. As a protection from any similar outrage, the approach from the northern side was walled off. But the charm of the place was broken, and its more valuable contents were removed elsewhere. Thenceforward it was used only for storing the regalia, State records, copies of international treaties, and the box (or pyx) containing the die of the coin of the realm. One by one these glories have since passed away, except the pyx, which remains and gives its name to the historic chamber. The regalia remained there in the times of the Commonwealth. Henry Marten was then charged with the duty of examining these showy emblems of discarded royalty. Dragging the crown, sceptre, and robe from their chest, he put them on George Wither, the poet, of whom it is recorded, that being thus royally arrayed, "he first marched about the room in the stately garb, and afterwards, with a thousand apish and ridiculous actions, exposed these relics to contempt and laughter."

In modern times what little is left of the majesty of the place is more jealously guarded from the intrusion of the profane. Visitors to the Abbey are not admitted to the Pyx Chapel, which is now, indeed, rarely opened, except for official purposes. It



is situated in the eastern cloister, south of the entrance to the Chapter House. The extreme care with which it has always been protected is shown by the provision of heavy double doors, solid and ironbound. These are opened by six large keys, which used to be kept by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and two other high officers of State. Formerly these functionaries had all to be present together with their respective keys when the chamber was unlocked. Even now, it is no easy matter to secure a peep at the interior, official permission having to be obtained. Although called a chapel, there is no trace of its having been used as such. It is really a vault, and so dark that nothing can be seen without the aid of candles. In one corner are the remains of what some authorities declare to be the tomb of Hugolin, the Confessor's chamberlain, whose strict guardianship of the royal treasure kept even his royal master in awe. He was the great prototype of the English Chancellors of the Exchequer. The early Norman pillar in the centre of the chamber and some antique features of the roof illustrate the claim of this mysterious chamber to be the one undoubted relic of Edward the Confessor's architecture. The early coins of the Norman period were kept, if not also made, in the Pyx Chapel. The ancient punches used in those bygone centuries for stamping the coins are still preserved, and until recently the vessel for melting the bullion was also kept here; but it has now been removed to the Mint. Early in this century, the place had rather the appearance of a lumber cell, but it is now kept in good order. Thousands of manuscripts connected with the Abbey were discovered imbedded in the rubbish with which the floor was piled up. These are now in safe custody. The old treaties were cleared out and arranged by Sir Francis Palgrave, father of the present Clerk of the House of Commons. Some of these are now preserved at the Record Office, and others at the British Museum. They were formerly littered in the same oak chests and presses as had always contained them—the same which Agard, Warden of the Standards in 1610, described as being then ancient. The presses now contain nothing but old Exchequer tallies, ancient seals, and still more ancient keys. Readers may not be generally aware that it was the burning of a surplusage of these curious wooden tallies which led to the destruction by fire of the old Houses of Parliament.





DOORWAY OF THE TIME OF THE CONFESSOR. UNDER THE DORMITORY.

The one characteristic use

still made of the old chapel is the storage of the assay plates or standards for testing the weight and fineness of the gold and silver coinage. These are in the custody of the Board of Trade, and are produced by Mr. Chaney, Director of the Standards Department, when required annually, for what is known as "the trial of the Pyx."

It may here be explained that the Pyx is a box in which a certain number of coins of every denomination are placed by the Master of the Mint, as specified in the Coinage Act of 1870. When moved in due course to hold a trial, the Treasury, in accordance with time-honoured custom, instructs the Goldsmiths' Company to appoint for the purpose an expert and competent jury. The standard plates are then taken from the Pyx Chapel to the Goldsmiths' Hall. The first business of the jury is to count all the coins submitted to them in the Pyx, to see that their numbers tally with the Mint accounts. They then have to weigh the coins in bulk and several individually, and to apply various assaying tests by fire and acids to coins both of gold and silver. An especially severe chemical examination is made as to purity of ingots made from certain coins of either metal. All their findings in these operations have to be embodied in a verdict, which is afterwards published in the *London Gazette*. After the trial, the assay plates are carefully returned to the Pyx Chapel, where they have always been kept since the Norman period. Although forming part—and the oldest part—of the fabric of Westminster Abbey, that chamber never passed under the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical authority, but has always remained in the possession of the State. Overshadowed but not absorbed by the ecclesiastical influences around, it testifies at once to the sacredness and to the independence of the Crown.

TWO POPULAR STYLES OF ART-NEEDLEWORK.

RICH Oriental effects, sparkle and glitter, bright pure colours, gleam of gold and silver—these are the characteristics of many of the embroideries and fabrics in use for houses at the present time. Though there is said to be some slight diminution in the amount of gold thread now employed, it is amply made amends for by the purl, the bullion, the gold gimp and cord. One of the favourite colours of the season is bright primrose, for brilliance almost equalling buttercup yellow, but differing in tint. The sparkle and glitter are given by the cut jewels of many hues. To the list of showy requisites for modern embroideries we might add gold and silver spangles, as well as tinsels, with red, blue, green, or yellow silk interwoven.

The jewels are made of various shapes and sizes. The round ones are useful for centres of flowers and for filling in between scroll outlines. Oval stones come in well for centres of petals, for stars, and for narrow borderings. Some are uncut, but these are not so generally liked, for they are not as effective as the cut ones. A thin leaf of metal is laid on at the back to increase the sparkle, and they are pierced for sewing on to the materials. Rubies and emeralds, as a matter of course, are imitated in these cut-glass "jewels," but, for our part, we admire most the pieces of work which are studded only with the palest coloured gems, such as delicate pink and yellow topazes, the lightest aqua marines thrown up with a few diamonds. Sapphires and opals have not been forgotten, so there is no lack of choice.

Gilt-mounted jewels are most attractive for certain kinds of work. They are set singly in the nearest approach to gold claw setting, taking into account the metal and the price. These, it goes without saying, are more expensive than unset stones, but then only a few are needed in comparison. Later on we will show how these can be appropriately introduced by workers.

Now, as to the materials, we give the palm to plush. Velvet follows next, then silk, and lastly satin. Crêpe and chiffon are permissible, but rather difficult to manage. If either of these thin materials is chosen three layers must be tacked on to a foundation of slightly stiff muslin, and the embroidery worked, and jewels sewn on right through the foundation; this is, if we want our work to last, and not "drag." For draperies of dresses the crêpe is left clear, but for articles for the home it is best to back the fragile fabric as we have suggested. Fine French cloth is a favourite material with many embroiderers: it is durable, and the colours it is now dyed must please the most fastidious taste. Whether jewel embroidery is suitable for washing fabrics will probably remain a vexed question. If a thing looks pretty only a minority are inclined to cavil at its want of merit from an artistic point of view, and to make any objection to it on account of incongruity between material and decoration. Anyhow, both linen and sateen are ornamented with the imitation jewels and find admirers.

We place plush first, as the depth of shade and the reflections of light materially assist in throwing up the jewels. Velvet is rather harder looking, more uncompromising, especially the velveteen which so many substitute for silk velvet. Still we would not hinder our readers from selecting it if they feel so inclined, for the latest fashion is to cover cushions with velvet. It has always been the one stuff chosen by jewellers to show off precious stones—at least as long as our memory serves; but lately we notice some are using plush in its place. Probably this is a revival, as most fashions are if we did but know it.

If we describe a cushion we have before us, while

writing, it may help some workers, who have never had an opportunity of seeing jewel embroidery, to set a piece going without any fear of failure. The ground is olive-green plush—one of the most useful colours, for it wears well, and is not quarrelsome. The cushion is square and measures nearly twenty-one inches. The corners are covered with a rather lighter shade of olive-green satin; this is put on in plaits to give a great quantity of fulness, but they scarcely show, for the satin is caught down carelessly here and there to form puffs; the more irregular the better, apparently. The back is lined with silk twill—a light shade to correspond with the satin—and the cushion is edged with olive-green silk cord, with three large loops at each of the four sides as well as at the corners.

CUSHION.
(*From a design by Mr. Vicars, 104, Newgate Street, E.C.*)

But the embroidery is the part that must be most accurately described: workers can then get hints for all kinds of articles. A spray of conventional flowers is thrown across from the left-hand lower corner to the upper right-hand one, but it spreads with light sprays to the other corners also. Very simple stitches are used; in fact, none but the stem stitch and satin stitch. Some of the stems of the flowers are done in golden brown and some in gold filoselles; others are done with gold twist sewn down with silk to match in colour. First come two leaves; one turned so as only to show half. The centre of the leaf is worked with three long stitches across, and just a feather stitch on each side where they commence. This is studded with four light yellow topazes and outlined with gold twist. The points round it are veined with yellow filoselle, and in the middle of each a very pale aqua marine is sewn on over the veinings. Then come two large leaves treated like the first, but pink topazes take the place of the yellow. The centre of the large flower is worked with radiating stitches of yellow filoselle starting from a deep yellow topaz, and each ending with a light yellow topaz; a circle of gold twist for outline. The petals are partially filled in with filoselle, but plenty of the plush is left uncovered round the jewels to throw them up. Above the centre is an oval surrounding a star; this oval band is studded with diamonds. The commencement of the stem is rather heavily worked with satin stitch. Springing out from behind the large flower, right and left, are light outlined sprays of conventionalised heartsease and leaves; the centres are formed of the various jewels used in the heavier spray. All the design is outlined with gold twist except the heartsease blossoms and the stems. All jewels are sewn on with silk to match.

With such a detailed notice of this cushion it will be unnecessary to describe any other piece of work fully. Many variations of the same idea can be produced by our readers. On small articles tiny sprays are tipped with spangles, while the rest of the design is carried out in coloured silks, gold cord, and jewels. Occasionally star flowers are tipped with French knots if the material has a flat surface. Stems are sometimes done with gold thread; two rows are sewn down with red, or any other coloured silk to suit the ground colour. Now and then we see stars made only of jewels, but those look best introduced amongst others of silk and jewels.

The still popular bolster cushions can be ornamented with bands of jewel embroidery. Antimacassars should have one or both ends decorated with it; the centre left plain. These are thrown straight over the backs of chairs, as in the old days before the craze of "knotting up" came in. Brocade photo frames have become so common that a novelty would be refreshing. Suppose some of our readers cover any old one they have by them in this way. Take off the brocade, embroider three-fold gauze (tacked on muslin foundation) with silk, jewels, and spangles; choose a light design, and use small jewels of the best quality. The latter may be of bright, strong colours, as in a small article, such as this, a rich Oriental effect is telling. Fasten on the gauze, then line the back neatly with silk. Very dainty sachets for wedding presents could be made of gauze, or crêpe with frill of same; the frill should not be jewelled, but be done with silk and a few spangles, whilst the sachet itself is jewelled and spangled. The unset jewels are quite inexpensive, and, indeed, this kind of embroidery costs but little, for only a trifling quantity of silk is used in comparison with that

used for other sorts of work. The quality of the gems, however, varies, and therefore the price.*

Mounted jewels are suited for velvet and silk bookbindings, for blotter covers, and caskets. The designs in which these are used should be thoroughly conventional. Arabesques or set patterns are charming; these may be wrought in satin stitch or laid work with a large oval jewel in the centre, and four smaller ones at the corners.

We have not entered on the subject of jewelled fabrics and trimmings for dress, as it would take up too much space, but we may pause a moment to say that gold and coloured silk braids are used as foundations of some of the prettiest jewelled trimmings; whilst cream, white, and black nets are the most fashionable for jewelled draperies, and silk and satin for jewelled fabrics. Gold beads and pearls are often employed simultaneously with jewels. Turquoises and gold beads are lovely on black net, and round coral intermixes admirably with faceted jet.

Now we will turn to the consideration of the second of the fashionable styles of art work: this is known as coral embroidery. It is a revival, but under modern modes is certainly attractive. The very finest, smallest pieces of coral it is possible to get make the daintiest decorations, though not the most showy for the amount of work put into them. Coral is sold by the string, and the more irregular the shape of the pieces the better the work looks when finished. The pieces are sewn on with coral silk and are generally used on velvet, silk, or satin, but sometimes on thin fabrics.* There are two ways of working. In one, coral and gold thread are used alone; in the other, they are combined with silk embroidery. We much prefer the latter: the result is richer. The embroidery takes off the hard effect that is always more or less in evidence when coral and gold only work out the pattern. The gold thread is sewn down with yellow or coral silk. Twist is preferable to plain thread for this embroidery.

SPRAY FOR LID OF CASKET.
(*From a design by Mr. Vicars*, 104, *Newgate Street, E.C.*)

To show how the work is done, we will describe a fancy casket suited for drawing table or toilet table. Perhaps the most uncommon shape is oblong with Gothic lid. This is the shape that many of the caskets of olden days were made, and we often see copies of them now, as far as the casket itself is concerned, in our first-class art schools and societies' depôts, but never, or but seldom elsewhere. As for the embroideries of figures, animals, trees, fruit, flowers, and castles, life is too short for these to be reproduced except on rare occasions. The casket is covered with heliotrope satin, and lined with a lighter shade of moiré. Sprays of flowers ornament the lid and front, back and sides. The stems are put in with double gold twist; the petals of flowers with rows of twist and silk embroidery, and down the centre of each are sewn pieces of coral. The leaves are composed of silk embroidery and outlined with gold twist; pieces of coral are sewn along the middle, but not so closely together as to look heavy. All the embroidery is done with shades of coral coloured silk. If a still richer effect is desired, the ground can be worked over with delicate tendrils in gold thread and powdered with tiny coral beads. The silks used should be graduated from the deepest red coral to the palest pink. An arabesque design has a geometrical figure in the centre, and flowers, leaves, and tendrils radiating towards the edges of another square casket intended to hold jewels or small curios. The centre of the geometrical figure is filled in sparsely with coral beads. Flowers and leaves show a little satin stitch, but gold twist predominates. Single beads and clusters of three are sprinkled about between the outlines of the design. Pearls, steel, or jet may be satisfactorily combined with coral. Opera bags of velvet, covers for carriage clocks, sachets, photo screens, and dress trimmings are amongst some of the articles that can be executed with coral embroidery.

* They are sold by the dozen, either mixed or of one colour, and the lowest price is 3d. per dozen. It is worth while to buy "jewels" of good quality, as much depends on the clearness of the glass and on the cutting. The best sorts are only kept at first-rate emporiums for embroideries, but the commoner ones can be bought at all fancy workshops.

* Beads only are sometimes employed; at others both beads and pieces are introduced into the embroideries. The latter are to be had at 1s. a string; the former are rather more expensive. They are obtainable at art-needlework depôts, and jewellers who deal in silver, jet and steel ornaments, also supply them.

THE COURTSHIP OF FIREMAN DEANE: A RAILWAY ROMANCE.

BY HENRY FRITH.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

THE RIVALS.

Y host and I were seated outside my temporary Surrey house one evening, our eyes fixed upon the sunset, which was glowing through the browning trees. Across the landscape sailed a light white cloud of steam, which lingered almost affectionately, as it seemed to us, in the soft autumnal air.

"There's the fast express," remarked my companion, whose regard for his former business on the railroad had in no sense abated. "Tom Deane keeps his time right well!"

"Yes; I have noticed that train often," was my reply. "But if Deane can run to book-time, why do not other men do so?"

"Tom always was a steady fellow," replied my companion; "and as for runnin' to time, why, it depends on many things and people—guard, fireman, state o' the weather, and that. But Deane was always steady. Why his marriage with Phœbe Mayburn yonder was quite a novel romance story. He was on the branch line then as fireman, and the circumstances was much talked of. Maybe you heard them, sir?"

I replied in the negative. My pipe was soothing, the evening was mild; the time would suit the narrative. So I suggested that my host should tell me the incidents.

"There's a deal as goes on on the railway which no one minds," remarked the old porter; "and my experience is that the railway world is a'most different from the rest o' mankind, in a way, you understand. Tom Deane's experiences could say the same. You know which is Mr. Mugsby's house, sir? 'The Den.' Well, it's near the branch line, you know. Yes; very well. That's where Tom Deane first saw his sweetheart, as he was runnin'.

"She was lady's maid there then, before Mr. Mugsby's time, you understand; and Tom used to see her. A pretty gentle creature she was in those days: I mind her well. Fair, and well-built, with a bright smiling face, and white skin; and her hands small and plump, and soft—like a lady's.

"She 'did for' Tom Deane when one afternoon she waved her hand to him from the wall as he went by. He was a handsome fellow too, and in his Sunday clothes looked tip-top. You'd never have guessed it was Tom.

"Well, there was a 'feet'; a Railway Feet—*fate* is it, sir? we generally calls it 'feet.' Anyway, at the 'fate' for our orphanage, all came as could. The directors issued cheap tickets and passes; everyone who could get off went with his missus, his children, or his sweetheart, or by himself; and there was plenty o' fun and amusements of the usual sort.

"I went, and Tom joined me, but I found him absent-like, and looking around the merry-go-rounds and such places.

"'You're expecting someone, Tom,' says I; 'who is it?'

"'It's a young lady,' he replied quietly, looking shy.

"'Who is she, Tom,' I asked smilin'.

"'I don't know,' says he, 'so I can't tell ye.'

"'Do you mean that you don't know the young woman, Tom?'

"'Never spoke a word to her in my life. That's straight!' he said, 'I don't know her name either; but I'm just head over ears with her. I sent the tickets to the house on the chance of her coming.'

"'We were standing in front of one of the shows just then—a waxwork exhibition it was, and his eyes kept roaming about in all directions, but he was disappointed, I could see. All of a sudden his face changed as if you'd lighted a gas-lamp behind his two eyes. He brightened up tremendous, and catching hold o' me—I was younger then—he says in a low voice: 'There she is with her friend. Come along now.'

"He hurried me off, and, walking across, we cut into the girls' tracks. They were well-behaved young women both; one in particular, though, struck my fancies. Retiring, bashful-looking, but self-possessed. Oh, yes; she'd have stood no nonsense wouldn't Phœbe Mayburn.

"'There she is,' says Tom.

"'Why, it's Phœbe Mayburn, Mrs. Colonel Sorrens's own maid from The Den!'

"'The same, no doubt,' says he. 'Who's the other one? She's dressed out grand!'

"'A lively minx, I doubt,' says I. She was handsome; darker and bolder lookin' than Phœbe, but respectable as you please. I guessed who she was. She was Ellen Askhern, a farmer's daughter who had taken a situation at The Den. She was a fine wench, and her dark eyes seemed to look through Tom Deane.

"He raised his cap (quite the gentleman was Tom), and held out his hand to Phœbe, not taking any notice whatsomdever of the other. I nodded to them both, havin' seen them on the platform at odd times; and then Tom says—

"'I'm glad ye comed, Miss Phœbe.'

"'And who told you my name,' she asks, smiling kindly at him.

"'A little bird,' says he.

"'Was it a goose, young man?' asks the other girl grinnin', yet admirin' Tom, I could see.

"'No, miss, it wasn't a goose,' says he, 'nor yet

a peacock,' alludin' to Ellen's grand finery. 'Isn't it right, miss?'

"'Yes,' says Phœbe; 'but how did you know I was to be here? I saw you on your engine this morning. It's the *Firefly*, isn't it?'

"'That's right. I'll show her to you some day if you like. But 'twas me sent the tickets to the house in the hope that you'd be let come. I've been expectin' you!'

"'Come, young man, don't stand here listenin' to them two ninnies. Take me to see somethin,' says Ellen to me. 'You two sillies can come if ye want to?'

"Neither Phœbe nor Tom said a word to us. They just passed off, and so did I with Ellen, who was in a way jealous of her friend. Certainly, Tom was handsome and kind lookin' and Miss Ellen was a fine girl, used to bein' admired; so Tom, ye see, annoyed her by his uncarin' ways. But we saw the shows and things and went to have tea.

"After tea Phœbe was for goin' home, but Ellen said she wasn't, and laughed at Phœbe.

"'Mistress said we were to leave at five; I'm going, Ellen. She'll want me to dress her.'

"'I'll see you safe home,' says Tom, as sharp as a needle. 'Miss Ellen is in safe hands.'

"'Safer than yours a long way,' she replied crossly. 'If I was Phœbe I'd think twice o' strollin' off with an engine man.'

"'You wouldn't think twice of it if you were yourself,' retorted Phœbe, noddin' at her. 'Your porter will see after you, I dare say. But I needn't take you away, Mr. Deane; I can go alone.'

"'I'd rather go; you won't shunt me off now, surely,' he says. 'Why I seem to know you quite well. Many a time I've seen you by the wall and in the window. Let me go with you!'

"'We'll all go,' says Ellen. 'Come along; it's past five, and we must be off. I'm tired o' the place. Good-bye, porter,' says she, suddenly turnin' to me; 'you needn't see me home, *I* can take care o' myself.'

"I saw her intentions: it was to stop Tom Deane's walk. So I wouldn't be put off.

"'I'm going' with Tom,' says I; and he's promised to escort Miss Phœbe. So you must come along o' me, if you please.'

"'And I don't please then: you can walk with them and I'll go by myself. It's daylight, and I want no railway porters to carry me.'

"She was vexed, I could see, but she didn't spoil sport; for Tom and Phœbe took no notice of her, bein' wrapped up in their two selves. Ellen then began to talk to me loudly, so we got on a bit; but she looked like mischief.

"We parted with the girls at the gates, and they went up the avenue together. We could hear Ellen's jeerin' laugh at Phœbe, and concluded that she had made an unpleasant remark about Tom or me, or the two of us.

"I tell you I didn't like it, sir; and knew that Ellen wouldn't be long before she did mischief."

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

BEWITCHED.

"'PHŒBE'S a good girl,' remarked Tom to me as we went towards the station, 'and Ellen is a fine young woman, too.'

"'She was quite jealous of you, Tom; I could see that.'

"'Ah, do you think so?' says he. 'I must say she's a splendid girl; not so delicate-looking as Phœbe. I shouldn't have minded a talk with her.'

"I laughed, and said: 'I'm afraid you're a bit unsettled, Tom. Don't play any tricks, mind you. Phœbe isn't one of the common run, I can tell you. She's as good, ay, better than Mary Simmons, I do believe.'

"You remember I told you about Mary Simmons, sir, a while ago?" said my host, pausing in his narrative.

I nodded, and he resumed—

"Tom said that was so, and as we went down to the shed where the ingin was, he told me that Phœbe had as good as promised to come and see the ingin and get to understand it. This idea pleased Tom very much, I could see, and one day she did come; several weeks after the 'fate,' sir, it was.

"It so happened that I was in the shed myself, and seein' Phœbe comin' I whistled to Tom, who was under the *Firefly*, lookin' to the gear. He came out all oily and grimy, and wipin' his hands, after puttin' his lamp on the framin' of the ingin', he waited for Phœbe.

"She came from the platform into the little ingin' shed. No one was about; no train was due, and when she came in I went into the cabin—a kind of a room in the shed where the ingin-men have their meals if waitin'. It is a small place with paper pictures on the walls, and time-tables, and some sketches of people. There I sat and smoked my pipe, not *listenin'* to Tom and his young woman; only, of course, I couldn't help hearin' some of their talk.

"'So this is your place is it, Mr. Deane?' says the girl as she came out of the sunshine like a fairy, into the gloom of the shed, amidst the dust and dirt. The ingin was smokin' up to the roof, which was blackened and sooty.

"'Not my place in partic'lar,' says he; 'I've to stay here a while. Here's the engine. What do you think of her?'

"'It's a monster!' cried Phœbe. 'Ever so much bigger than it looks on the line! Why I thought it was only a small engine!'

"'So she is; only a tank-engine,' says Tom; 'not a tender-engine.'

"'What's a *tender*-engine?' asked Phœbe, lookin' straight at Tom. I could see her plain. 'Is it a softer or smaller kind?'

"'A tender-engine has a tender—it's attached to it, you know—a kind of marriage, Miss Phœbe.'

"'Oh!' says she. 'I didn't know that engines married. Tender is a funny word to use, isn't it?'

"'Don't you like tender things?' asked Tom, comin' round to her quietly.

"'Oh, yes; meat, for instance! I like tender meat,' said she.

"'Would you like to get on the engine?' says he. 'You can get up if I help you.'

"'Isn't it dangerous? It won't blow up, will it?' asked Phœbe.

"'Not it; why it's hardly in steam yet. My mate won't be here for an hour or so. There you are,' he continued, as he handed her up. 'You look lovely on the *Firefly*, and, let me tell you, I wish *you* were my mate, Phœbe!'

"'Oh, but *I* couldn't drive the engine!' she said. 'I would be no use as your mate.'

"'Perhaps not on the engine,' says Tom; 'but in the house—my house.'

"'Oh, what *do* you mean, Mr. Deane? You can't want an engine-driver at home!'

"'No, but I'd like a mate there; don't you understand me, my lass? I'm in love with you, and if ye'd only come——'

"She didn't say anything for a minute, and I smoked my pipe, sir, not likin' to go out, and thinkin' it best to keep out of sight. At length she said—

"'But I'm going away with Mrs. Sorrens and the colonel in a couple of days!'

"'Going away!' exclaimed Tom in a changed voice. 'Is it for long?'

"'I don't know. Maybe all winter.'

"'Ah, well, then it's no use!' he said, quite depressed. 'You can't do it; but if you care for me at all——'

"Then, sir, I couldn't hear any more; and peepin' out I just saw Tom with his arm around her, whisperin' in her ear. They didn't notice me, and so I slipped out of the shed like a lamb.

"In a few minutes—say ten or so—Phœbe passed me on the platform, and nodded to me with a happy face. So it's all settled, thinks I.

"'Good-afternoon, miss,' says I. 'You're looking splendid to-day. But you'll excuse me, Miss Phœbe, there's a couple of dark smudges on your cheek. The right cheek it is. Let me help——'

"But she blushed red as the tail-lamps of the express, and went off with a danger-signal in each cheek flamin' red, and rubbin' her face like a cat as she walked.

"'So ho!' thinks I, 'Tom's found his mate then. Well, he deserves her.'

"In a few days the colonel, his wife, and Phœbe, lookin' very sad-like, left home. Tom was on the ingin, but couldn't hardly have a word with her. They parted at the junction yonder, sir, and Tom became quiet. He picked up a bit afterwards, but time went on and he heard less and less of Phœbe.

"'She's forgot me,' he says to me one day about Christmas time. 'But I s'pose it's only natural. Some foreign party has taken her fancy, I dare say.'

"'What was Ellen doin' round here, this mornin', Tom?' says I suddenly.

"'She came to tell me no letter has arrived, that's all. She's a good sort is Nelly. A good-natured girl as ever stepped.'

"'She can't touch Phœbe, man,' says I.

"'No, but she's a fine handsome girl, and as kind as she can be. She's a dazzler!'

"'Look here, Tom. If I was you I'd give up dazzlers. They're blindin' your eyes.'

"'Rubbish,' says he. 'Nell is as good as gold.'

"'Oh, it's come to Nell, is it,' says I. 'Then I see your game. Tom Deane, mind what you're about. Write to Phœbe, and ask her to reply soon. Get it fixed with her.'

"'I will, I'll write this very day,' says he. And he did!

"Three days after I saw Ellen again, in the field walkin' with Tom, very quiet, and four days later she came down with a letter in her hand. Tom was on the ingin on the siding, and I strolled up o' purpose, not wishin' Phœbe to be wronged.

"'Well, Nelly, my girl, how's yourself?' cries Tom. He didn't ever speak so free to Phœbe; I noticed the difference, sir.

"'Any news this morning?'

"'Nothing for you, Tom,' says Nellie. 'But I have had a letter which I am afeard will trouble you. I can't let you read it all, but I'll read you what is intended for you. It's from Phœbe.'

"'From Phœbe, eh? She has had my letter then! I told you I wrote plain.'

"'Yes, and she has replied plain—it's too bad *I* call it, Tom. Just listen:

"'Tell Tom Deane if he can't wait he may give it up! If he don't like it he must lump it! I can't write to him to-day, so tell him to keep quiet awhile.'

"'There! Cruel *I* call it. *I'd* never treat a man like that!'

"'No, Nell, and I won't be treated that way, either. I'll give her up! You can write and tell her I won't "lump it." Ah, Nell, my girl, I'm regular done now. Thank you, lass. I'll see you this evening.'

"'At the usual spot, I suppose?'

"'Ay, at the little stile; seven sharp.'

"Ellen went away not takin' any notice of me whatsomdever. So I came up to Tom, and said—

"'You and Nelly seem pretty thick, my lad.'

"'Ay, not bad that way. Phœbe has turned me off.'

"'I don't believe it, Tom."

"'What! When I tell you I've seen her words, no heard them—all the same. She says I may take it or leave it; "lump it" is her words.'

"'Phœbe Mayburn never used them words, I'll swear, Tom. She's a lady, she is!'

"'A nice lady to turn over a poor fireman! No; I'm going on the other line. I'll put up Nelly in church o' Sunday, sure's my name's Tom.'

"'And you'll be sorry for it, Tom.'

"'Not me,' was his answer in them very words. 'Nell's a splendid girl, as handsome as paint.'

"Then, sir, I knew all interference was useless-like, so I said no more. Oh, it was a shame!"

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

A COLLISION.

"AFTER that there was no disguise about it. The banns was put up, and Miss Ellen walked about as

proud as any peacock. She had won the game, and was, I may say, in an unmaidenly hurry to marry Tom. Perhaps she was afeard of losin' him if she didn't immediately secure him. At any rate no time was lost. By February the day was fixed, the banns having expired, and no one offered any impediment.

"Tom Deane seemed to me to agree with rather than originate these arrangements. He was evidently dazzled by the young woman: she had bewitched him, but he was not so demonstrative as he had been. She had quitted The Den and gone home to her father's farm while the wedding was preparing.

"I talked to Tom, and gave him my mind. He made no defence; he only said 'Why doesn't Phœbe write, then! She's thrown me over. Let her go.'

"'You haven't any proofs, Tom,' I said. 'But things have gone too far to turn, I suppose.'

"'I'll marry Nell. We've arranged the whole thing. There's to be a train-wedding. We're goin' to Rushtock by rail on the main line in trucks hung out with ribbons and flags, a regular show! We'll let 'em see a fireman's weddin', he says.

"Fortunately the weddin'-day dawned fair and frosty. As the morning passed the sun came out, and at eleven o'clock when the weddin'-train started the weather was crisp and bracing—a bright sun, and hardly a cloud visible. The train was a sight! Anyone went who liked to pay a shillin'. We had the train of ballast trucks draped with flags and with seats fixed across. There was a band in one truck and the ingin was the *Firefly*. Tom and his intended occupied a compartment in an otherwise empty carriage next to the ingin. A lively company we were, too. There was refreshments and music, banners, singin', and the weather lovely.

"No one was late. We had four trucks, one van, and the carriage—a second-class carriage—in front. We had to travel on the branch-line to the junction, cross there, and so over the up-metals for a while to the down road. Tom seemed in bad spirits, his fun was forced-like, he didn't seem easy, and I fancied that he was sorry for what he had done. None of Ellen's fellow servants had been invited, but she was as happy as a queen, and would have made a splendid queen, as she stood at the door of her railway carriage, regal-like.

"I was sittin' in the rear van with Charley Down (I could tell you something about him, sir, too), when I happened to put up my head to the glass roof, and saw steam in the air at a distance.

"'We shall be stopped in a minute, Charley,' says I. 'There's a train yonder.'

"'It's going our way,' he said. 'We follow the mail. It's all right.'

"So we went joggin' along pretty fast, and all the platelayers and signalmen stared at us greatly, and cheered us. The ingin-driver was puttin' us along very sharp, when as we got near the junction the signal suddenly went up bang in our faces! We hadn't such brakes nor interlockin' gear in those days as now, so it was some seconds before the train could possibly pull up.

"We got on the main line—just on it. The ingin, carriage, and two trucks were over, and we intended to back off, when suddenly a shrill whistlin' made the blood of some of us run cold.

"Charley jumped up and looked at his train-book, and then out of the window.

"'It's the tidal,' he shouted. 'The signalman's clean forgot it. Come on. Get the people off the line.'

"We hurried on, and pulled those on the trucks off to the embankment. There was hardly time for anything. The tidal train—at that time a new train on our line, sir—was runnin' fast, and it came sweeping round the corner, slippin' and slidin'; while our ingin men were tryin' to back the weddin' train off the points and clear them.

"But there wasn't a minute. Everyone saw the danger. A couple of yards to spare would have made things safe. No use to try more! The men leaped off. Tom pulled Ellen out; he tried to get her away, and he would have only she was so frightened and clung to him so tightly. She might have escaped with him, but as it was she impeded him. She flung her arms close around Tom, and embraced him. But he shook her off; there was no time for kissing then. She fell, he dragged her clear of the crash; but a splinter struck her, and cut into her neck, severing an artery. She lay bleedin' to death a'most, when a gentleman, a doctor, ran up and helped her. She was carried to the cottage hospital, dyin', sir!

"Tom had a narrow escape, and when he fancied Nellie was safe he assisted the tidal passengers. From one of the very first compartments he dragged out an insensible girl, and when he looked at her he nearly dropped her light form.

"She was Phœbe Mayburn! Phœbe in his arms! Was she dead? Dead! Oh, misery if so, thinks I. But maybe best.

"He laid her gently down, and tried to ascertain whether she still lived. Yes, her heart was beating. He waited. She would recover. Oblivious of all else he awaited her return to life. She opened her eyes, saw him kneeling beside her, and seemed scared; but in a minute she knew him, and crying out: 'Oh, Tom, Tom; my darling Tom!' she fainted in his arms again, at once!

"This was a most perplexing predicament for Tom Deane. He had made up his mind so completely that she was false that he knelt like a man struck. But when she came to she hugged him, and seemed hurt at his behaviour and coldness. He got her away after a while, but his appearance was terrible. He had made a discovery. Phœbe loved him as well as ever, and he loved her still.

"Making inquiries he was guided to the hospital where Nelly lay. He was admitted; and his tears dropped on her hand as he pressed it pitifully in his own. She was so weak and pale! An hour before she had been full of life and health, joyous, if anxious. Now she was a wreck, bruised, dying; and as she gently returned the pressure of his fingers, she whispered—

"'Tom, will you forgive me? I am dying. Oh,

forgive me, dear! I loved you well; indeed I did. But you never loved me like you loved Phœbe.'

"'Yes, Nell, yes,' he muttered. 'Oh, don't talk of dyin'.'

"'I must tell you,' she gasped. 'Oh, Tom, I loved you from the first day we met, and I vowed I would make you marry me: I did, I'm shamed to say it—but I loved you, dear. Phœbe went away, and I deceived you. I stopped her letters; I made up her messages to you. Tom, I am rightly punished. I cannot be your wife, dear; but you will marry her when she comes back."

"'She is back,' he murmured, too stunned to think much or to reply to her prayers for forgiveness. 'Phœbe was in the 'tidal' that smashed us up.'

"'It is the Lord's will. I see His hand in it,' murmured the dying woman. 'God forgive me! Tom, kiss me once more——'

"He kissed her, sir; and when he told me this himself, he cried at the very remembrance of it, days after.

"SHE WAVED HER HAND TO HIM AS HE WENT BY" (*p.* 660).

"'Heaven bless you, Nelly. I forgive you, my lass. Say no more, my girl; say no more!'

* * * * * *

"I came up myself, sir, after this, to inquire, and managed to look in. There was the nurse and the doctor lookin' on the bed, and beside it was sitting poor Tom Deane, holding the cold dead hand of Nelly Askhern!

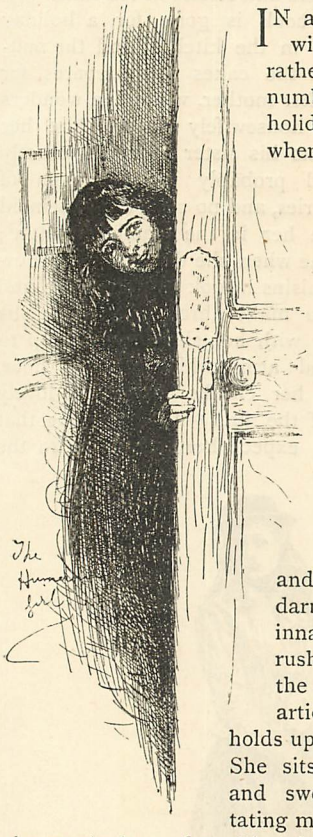
"It was a sad time, sir; but luckily Phœbe Mayburn was spared the details. She had a concussion,

and when she at length recovered she couldn't think of, or remember, the accident; and knew nothin' of the details for many a month. She begged Tom to tell her why he had ceased to write to her, and if he still cared for her; which in his heart he did. He knew it all the time! Then pluckin' up heart he told her all the truth, and Phœbe forgave him, after a long cry, and much soothin', as it wasn't all his fault, she said.

"After a few months more—a year after the smash—when Tom had been promoted to drivin', he and Phœbe were married quietly, and their first joint act, as man and wife in our village yonder, was to put up a marble tombstone to the memory of Nelly who had been killed on the railway on her weddin'-day!

"That's the story, sir; and here's your supper comin' in. After you, sir."

OUR BELONGINGS: THE GIRLS.



IN a long schoolroom, with windows overlooking a rather untidy garden, are a number of girls. It is "Work holiday"—a monthly festival, when a story-book is read aloud and clothes are mended. Carrie Hatherwood has her fist nearly through the heel of a stocking, and is proceeding with a very large needle and coarse cotton to fill up the gap in a fashion of her own. Presently the stocking is twitched from her grasp, and the clear voice of Miss Kirkewhite says: "Girls, girls! Come and see how Carrie can darn!" The girls, with the innate cruelty of their sex, rush from all corners of the room to inspect the article the head mistress holds up to view. Poor Carrie! She sits with crimson cheeks and swelling heart—a palpitating mass of indignation. In the particulars of stocking-darning the heedless girl speedily amends her ways; but her faults are too many, and her temperament too excitable, for the change to extend to other departments. She is invariably to be seen with a rent somewhere in her frock, large ink-stains on her apron and fingers, her hair a ribbonless tangle, and her shoes often down at heel. If she carries a number of books from one room to another, they slide from her grasp, and when she hands the bread and butter or passes the tea, some portions are to be found on the table, or in the laps of neighbours. She tumbles up stairs, slides down, walks into puddles, trips over the grass, loses her handkerchiefs, upsets the chairs, bruises herself against furniture, and never finds anything for which she is sent to look.

These heedless ones are trials at home: mother despairs, and father laughs; while at school Carrie is a sign-post to show the way wherein walking is not good. The heedless girl has often unusually large hands and feet, her limbs are long, and loosely knit, and she is frequently short-sighted: her defects may now and again be remedied by a good course of calisthenics, and a visit to the optician. Occasionally she develops a considerable talent for music, drawing, or languages, and this throws her awkwardness into the background. It causes her much hard work and many tears to conquer her vexatious faults; but if she grows into a neat and careful woman, she has in the process acquired self-control and discipline which make her of sterling worth.

A different type is the "beauty." In every assemblage of girls there is one pre-eminent for good looks, and a pretty girl between the ages of fourteen and sixteen is a very beautiful creature. She is gracefully formed, as well as lovely of face; the smooth cheeks, red lips, soft masses of hair, bright clear eyes, and pearly teeth have the *beauté de jeunesse* as well as

that of form and colour. The masters do not scold her, her schoolfellows call her by pet names, her brothers say she is "awfully decent to look at," and the "beauty" does not remember a time when the small world of her surroundings did not bow to her

THE BEAUTY.

will. She is not often intellectual, and rarely grows into such loveliness as might be expected from present promise; but she is always a pleasure to look at, marries when quite young, and walks gently through life's daisy-spread paths.

We meet nowadays more often with the girl-genius, who is going to Girton after the High School, and to whom the study of mathematics, the intricacies of algebra, and the rules of grammar are pleasing diversions. She conquers difficulties by instinct, and cannot explain her mental processes. It is well for this girl if she be incited to play games and take to reading story-books. She very rarely cares for music, and frequently has no romance in her composition and no eye for colour. She develops, perhaps, into a clever, useful pioneer on the road for the higher culture of her sex; but the brightness and lightness, the hurry, fun, and bustle of life pass her by, and old-fashioned friends of her mother's still regard her almost as one of a race apart.

The girl with an overpowering sense of humour interests us immensely. She remembers her lessons by making jokes of their important facts: "King John was not a nice young man for a small tea-party"; "James the First was a prig and a duffer"; "Alfred the Great 'caught it hot' from the neatherd's wife"; and so on. She invents terribly appropriate names for governesses and schoolfellows, sets a whole class laughing by some grimace of imitation or caricature, turns reproofs inside out to make fun of, and laughs her way through schoolroom and home. She is not always a favourite, for she sees too clearly Tommy's absurdities and Mildred's foolish little ways. Her powers of mimicry lead her into scrapes sometimes—notably when she pranced across the lawn behind Mrs. Toplofty, in exact imitation of her gait and demeanour, unaware that one of that lady's daughters (having got out of the carriage a minute or two after her mother) was following her, filled with amazement and wrath. Troubles will sober this maiden, and her elastic temperament will stand her in good stead as she makes her way among the thorns and briars of the world.

The domestic girl is to be found on half-holidays making toffee and cakes over the schoolroom fire, and from slender materials turning out delicacies which delight her small brothers and sisters at tea-time. On the happy days when cook is gone for a holiday she is allowed to reign in the kitchen, and the puddings she makes and the cakes she prepares for afternoon tea surprise her mother, who often wonders whence came Mary's housewifely ways, while her father perhaps recollects his sister Joan did exactly the same. Mary will probably be a dragon of economy when she marries, and no cook or housemaid will be able to delude her in the smallest matter; there never was a time when she did not know how much suet, flour, and raisins it took for a pudding, and how many eggs go to make three pancakes. She looks very bewitching with her sleeves rolled up to her elbows, her round arms whitened with flour, her great apron, and her cheeks coloured a lovely pink from the heat of the fire. We will hope that her husband will not expect her to belong to the

The Athletic Girl

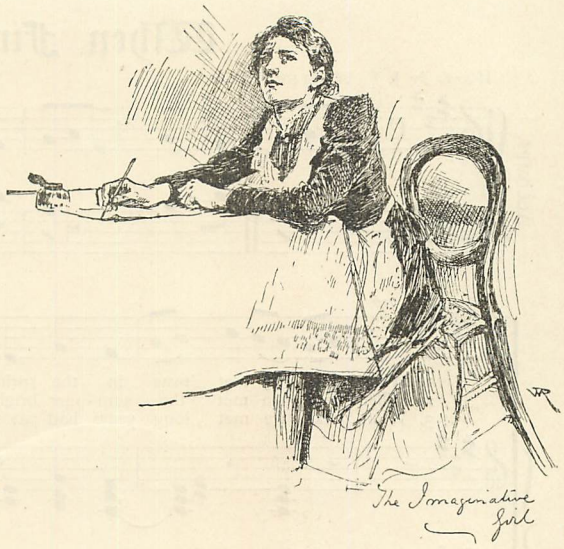
Browning Society or to read Shelley with him in the evenings; for to the paths of learning she does not incline.

A great contrast to her is the girl with imagination—who reads Wordsworth and Shakespeare when her comrades are immersed in "Beauty and the Beast" or "Cinderella." She has apt quotations for every storm and sunset, every event of the passing day, and astonishes her elder sister, who scolds her for something, by saying, "My faults lie open to the laws; let them, not you, correct them"; and tells one of her brothers he is "as prone to mischief as able to perform it"; while she writes poetry and helps to get up a magazine with two or three young friends. She lives in a world of her own, and the people about her, with all their deeds, are shadows, while in her realm of cloudland abide the only realities.

The sharp girl has a decided character: she is always ready with a criticism, an answer, a remark—jumps at conclusions (often correct ones) while others are just taking in the subject in debate. Her rapid brain works at lightning speed, and she makes enemies and friends in scores, as she epitomises their faults or virtues with a sarcasm or an epigram. She needs careful training, and requires to remember always that "the tongue is a fire." She does not know the power of speech, nor how chance words live and rankle. She is usually bright and merry, and almost always a centre of attraction wherever she is, but more feared than loved.

The placid girl is a great comfort at home; at school, too, she gets a large amount of commendation. Her books are neat, her lessons ready to time, her dress tidy, her hair an example, her temper unruffled, and her speech measured. She is not very interesting, perhaps, for her character seems devoid of salient points; but she is useful, gentle, homely, and never in extremes. In the nursery she is a treasure; she amuses the little ones, and her presence brings calm to the fiercest turmoil between Jack and Jennie or Mollie and Bertie. She is usually of fair complexion, plump of figure, and with blue or light-grey eyes—not very pretty, but fresh and pleasant-looking, and it seems to be her *métier* to walk through life without exciting remark.

The girl who can climb trees and play cricket with



her brothers is a charming variety. How lightly she scuds along, and how wildly enthusiastic she is with her shouts of "Well played there!" "Keep it up!" "Hold on!" She can jump a ditch, vault a gate, swarm up the oaks, and bat or bowl with any of her brothers; she gets into trouble very often for damages to dress or person; but by and by she will develop into a young lady "more than common tall," who can row, swim, play tennis, climb mountains, and ride across country without fear or fatigue. A happy girl is she, and a healthy life she leads. She usually turns out to be a most lovable and domestic woman, with sympathy for and interest in her children's pursuits, which cause her to be adored by them.

The girls—how we love them! How much their presence helps to make a home delightful. We often say of tiresome boys, "Poor things! they have no sisters," and of nice ones, "You can tell there are girls at home." Fathers spoil them, mothers often lose count almost of their present in longings that the future may be bright for them; and their hopes and fears, their pain or their pleasure, their well-doing and their well-being, colour the world in which they live for their loving parents. M. R. L.

CONTENT.

I CRAVE no treasure
Save such as I may find
In a contented mind:
Wealth beyond measure.

Let me not quarrel
With Fate, nor sigh for fame;
Give me an honest name:
The brightest laurel.

Though knaves may palter
With Love divine on earth,
Let me upon my hearth
Rear it an altar.

To me be given
A home built day by day—
One that shall flout decay—
A home in Heaven.

MATTHIAS BARR.

When First We Met.

Words by J. F. Waller, LL.D. *Music by* J. W. Hinton, M.A., Mus.D.

Accompt.

mf 𝄋

mp

1. When first we met 'twas in the spring, Blue skies filled heav'n a - bove, And
2. When next we met the sum - mer bright Was gay with bloom and flow'r, The
3. When next we met long years had passed, The spring had come a - gain, And

ma - ting birds be - gan to sing Their joy - ous songs of love; And
sing - ing birds had ta - ken flight, To nest in grove and bow'r; 'Twas
mem - 'ries sweet came flood - ing fast Our hearts like mu - sic's strain; Then

cres.

day by day, till mer - ry May, We lis - ten'd to their song,..... Till
e - ven - tide— we sat be - side The stream that flow'd a - long,..... And
did we say the love that lay Un - spoke from days of yore:..... A -

mf *dim.* *p* D.C. 𝄋

blos - som'd white the haw - thorn spray, Nor thought the hours were long.....
heard its rip - pling wa - ters glide, Sing - ing their dul - cet song.....
- - gain up - on our bri - dal - day, We met to part no more.....

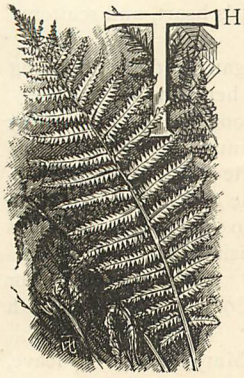
rall. D.C. 𝄋

LADY LORRIMER'S SCHEME.

By EDITH E. CUTHELL, Author of "The Story of a Glamour," "The Yacht in the Bay," etc. etc.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

TWO WAYS OF INTERFERING.



THE worst of it was that when Mrs. Aston, like most not very strong-minded people, got an idea into her head, it was extremely difficult to eradicate it. This especially applied to her match-making schemes, as we have seen. One morning she sat by the fire (Mrs. Aston was one of those people who begin fires early) when the door opened, and Miss Marshall was announced by the somewhat flustered maid-servant, who was not used to morning callers, and had been discovered with her sleeves turned up and a dirty apron on.

Effie, who looked white and delicate, was ushered in, and asked for Marjorie.

"You've had a nice walk over this morning, Miss Marshall. So quiet and still it is after the late gales; but I hope it's not going to rain."

"I've not walked over," replied Effie, much more languidly than was her wont. "I had such a bad night—I've taken to sleeping so badly lately that papa sent me out for a drive to get some air, and I thought I'd look in on Marjorie."

"Not sleep well? At your age, my dear young lady, that's very odd! It's a thing I never suffered from; I'm always dozing—in my chair, in church, and when people talk about things I don't understand. What are you taking for it?"

"Oh, I don't know!" replied Effie: "tonics, beef-tea—they're always stuffing me! But where is Marjorie? Will she be in soon?"

"She's only just gone out up to the school. Mr. Adams sent for her. That man thinks she's his slave, I do declare! She might as well be his curate, except for preaching. He doesn't seem able to do a thing without her, and he's always got so many irons in the fire, altering and upsetting all my poor dear husband's arrangements, which went on for years and years. But, dear me! I suppose I've got to put up with it!" she sighed.

"Please, mum," interrupted Elizabeth, putting her head in at the door circumspectly, to avoid exhibiting the dirty apron. "Can I speak to you, mum?"

"Dear, dear, I never knew anything like that girl! Will you excuse me, Miss Marshall?" and Mrs. Aston left the room.

"Now, Elizabeth," she began, in an irritated tone, as she closed the door, "how often have I told you that when visitors are here I can't have you poking in like——"

"Please, mum, I was all in a pother, and please, mum, Sir Hubert said I was to look sharp."

"Sir Hubert? Where is he?"

"A-waitin' in the porch, mum. He said he wouldn't come in, because he's got his dogs with him, but would I h'arsk if Miss Marjorie was in; he wanted to speak to her."

"Elizabeth, how could you? To keep Sir Hubert standing outside——"

"Well, mum, only the other morning you were so put out because of Farmer Smith's greyhound when he called about the cistern——"

"You're *too* stupid, Elizabeth. This is quite a different —— Good-morning, good-morning, Sir Hubert!" she cried affably, advancing into the porch, and coughing with the damp air.

Sir Hubert responded less affably. This was just what he had *not* wanted. By a little diplomacy in sending in a message for Marjorie, he had hoped to secure her and to avoid having to talk to Mrs. Aston, for which he felt in no sort of humour.

"No, thank you; I *can't* come in. I've been walking all over the farm; look at my boots. Get back, Bruce! go and lie down, Chip! All the pack are here, you see."

"Marjorie went up to the school some time ago. She should be back by now. I'll send Willie to hurry her," replied Mrs. Aston; and then, with a sudden inspiration, as an idea struck her, "I'll go and look for her myself. She'll be coming down the lane. Just step into the drawing-room, will you, Sir Hubert? I won't be long."

"Thank you. I'm giving a lot of trouble. Don't hurry on my account, pray," said Sir Hubert, catching at any excuse to get rid of the old lady.

He went into the drawing-room, and Mrs. Aston seized her garden shawl and bonnet, and departed by the back door, a meaning smile hovering over her face.

"Not hurry! I should think I shan't; and what's more, if Marjorie *is* on her way back, I shall not hurry *her*. I've managed that *re*markably neatly, I think," she purred on to herself. "He little guessed who was sitting in the drawing-room, he did! Ha! ha! They shan't say I never gave them a chance, bless their hearts!"

Emerging from the back yard slowly into the lane, she heard a noise of wheels. Miss Marshall's carriage, which had been waiting for her at the front gate, was just starting off, and in it sat Effie!

Mrs. Aston rubbed her eyes.

"Well I never! what can be the matter? Why, as he came into the room she must have got up and left it. Dear, dear! that was not at all what I intended."

Ere she could recover from her surprise she almost ran against Sir Hubert, striding very fast, with lowering brow.

"Sorry I can't wait any longer, Mrs. Aston," he said, without pausing, and stalked off in the opposite direction to that taken by the carriage.

"This is *most* extraordinary!" exclaimed poor Mrs. Aston, quite bewildered. "Whatever will Marjorie think of it? I hope I haven't done wrong?" she added.

"Effie left a message for me this morning that she had not been well, and as we had missed, would I go over and see her this afternoon," said Marjorie, as she sat after their early dinner, listening again and again to Mrs. Aston's versions and conjectures of the morning's occurrence.

"Do, my dear, do. I should wish you to. Lovers' quarrels, no doubt, and I should like them cleared up. I wish now I had stayed with them this morning; I might have been some use, perhaps."

Later Marjorie found herself at Darfield, and in Effie's boudoir.

"Lady Lorrimer has gone driving with papa, and I feel free and safe," cried Effie, as her friend entered. "She amuses poor papa, who is dull down here, and worried because I am not well. Oh, Marjorie! I'm so glad you've come. It is kind;" and she nestled to her.

"I promised, Effie, remember, that I would help—and listen, I did indeed. I gave Sir Hubert a hint. I think he understood, for he took it very nicely, and he—thanked me," she added, with a little hesitation.

"And thank you, too, Marjorie!" replied Effie, leaning back with a wearied air, in such strong contrast to her former vivacious, not to say excitable manner, that Marjorie, examining her closely, felt quite frightened to see the change. "But, though you meant well, it was of no use. Everything is altered now—everything is over!" and she moaned.

"He does—not—really—care for me," she went on slowly, with a far-away look in her eyes, almost as if she were repeating a lesson. "It's—my money—Lady Lorrimer says——"

"Effie! how can you?" exclaimed Marjorie, springing up indignantly. "You must—should not say such a thing of Hubert Erle. He is honour itself."

"Oh, but you don't know! you don't know!" wailed Effie.

"I know him better than that Lady Lorrimer. It's a foul falsehood to say he's after your money, Effie. I'm sure he cares for you, and not for that horrid——"

"But you do not know, Marjorie. There is someone else;" and Effie shook her head mournfully.

"Someone else?" repeated the other, and for one brief second a wild delicious hope darted through her mind, only to be dispelled by the next words.

"Someone named 'May,' whom he is going—to meet—on Friday," went on Effie dreamily, "at the—usual place. I saw the telegram," she added, dropping her head.

There was a dead silence in the little boudoir. Marjorie felt suddenly stunned.

"You saw the telegram?" she repeated, almost to herself, walking up and down the room distractedly. "And he told me—that he was torn in two—bothered to pieces. Those were his words—that he had lost his nerve—could not shoot. Can it be true? Is it possible? I—I *can't* believe it of Hubert! And yet his own words—the telegram——"

And Marjorie groaned aloud, and put her hand up to her brow with a wild gesture.

Effie leant back on her sofa, and watched her in utter prostration and despair. There was a pathos in her look which went to Marjorie's heart, and scattered all other feelings.

"My little Effie!" she began tenderly, kneeling down by her, and taking her in her arms.

But at that moment the door opened, and Lady Lorrimer entered. For a minute she looked none too pleased at finding Marjorie closeted with Effie. Then she advanced with a smile and drooping lids.

"Well, my child, and how do we find ourselves this afternoon?" she began, patronisingly. "I hope Miss Aston has not been tiring you? Effie is very unfit for a visitor, I fear, Miss Aston. Come and have tea with us downstairs, will you?"

So, much against her will, Marjorie had to leave, but as for staying to tea downstairs, with Lady Lorrimer playing hostess—no, she did not feel herself quite equal to that, and so presently found herself being dragged homewards by the old pony.

The river was running placidly again under Morchard Bridge. Turbid indeed it still was, but it was quiet, if somewhat sullen-looking, but perhaps that was the reflection of the heavy grey autumn sky. Nevertheless, the old More was not exactly a cheerful object to look upon to-day. So thought Hubert Erle as he strode over the long low bridge, his face set towards Cerne, listening to the low lap of the waters against the bridge.

Marjorie, jogging along homeward, saw the tall figure in shooting-suit and knickerbockers, and recognised him in an instant from afar, the faithful pack, Bruce, Chip, and Co., at his heels.

He looked up as he heard the wheels approaching, and his downcast face brightened a little.

"Oh Marjorie! is that you? Stop a bit, will you? You're the very person I wanted to see;" and he came and leant against the wheel of the old pony-chaise, while the ancient animal in the shafts halted, nothing loth.

"I tried to see you yesterday, Marjorie, but couldn't. I am awfully bothered—awfully annoyed about Ef—Miss Marshall."

"Well?" asked Marjorie, flicking imaginary flies off the pony's back.

"You remember what you told me when I met you as I came home from shooting? It was very nice of you to try and help——"

"I am so fond of Effie!" murmured Marjorie.

"Well, next morning, when I was over at Darfield, I managed to get a word with her alone just for a moment, and you know how one can read in that innocent little mind her very thoughts? I managed to show her that she need not be jealous of—of Lady Lorrimer," he added, fidgeting a little with the pony's harness.

"I understand," murmured Marjorie.

"And yet by that evening she had quite changed to me. I couldn't make it out. At dinner she did not show—she had one of her headaches—and after dinner, when she did come down, looking very sweet and lovely, though tired, she would hardly speak to me. Her manner was so odd. I could not make it out at all. I did not see her again next morning before I left. Then I went over to you and missed you. You heard, I dare say? Miss Marshall was in the drawing-room, but, would you believe it, she met me with the chilliest bow possible—I never saw Ef—her like that before—and marched out of the room without speaking. Oh Marjorie!" he cried, "what do you think I can have said, have done, to make her change thus? I've been racking my brains to try and discover, and I'm awfully down on my luck about it."

There was a pause, broken only by the lap of the water against the piles and the cry of a moor-hen among the reeds.

"Marjorie, can't you help me in this business? Can't you find out what's the matter? I tell you, Marjorie—I wouldn't talk about this to everyone, but you're such an *old* friend—I'm awfully fond of that sweet child, and her treatment of me just makes me wretched."

Marjorie hesitated a minute, then she answered very low and slowly—

"I think I can throw a light on this. Hasn't there been something about a telegram—about a meeting to take place *as usual* with a certain 'May'?"

Sir Hubert was silent a moment, looking up at her eagerly. Then he gave the pony a slap on the back, which startled the venerable beast out of his doze, and exclaimed joyfully—

"Hallo, Marjorie, I see it all now! What a mistake! What cross purposes!" and he laughed heartily. "Why, if it's only that telegram, that can soon be explained, no fear!" and he laughed again. "But I've been keeping you an age here in the cold, and you've been awfully kind, Marjorie, 'deed you have!"

And as she drove on up the hill Marjorie almost thought she could still hear him laughing.

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

ALL IS PUT RIGHT.

HUBERT ERLE did not let the grass grow under his feet. The next afternoon he again went to Darfield Hall, but in a very different frame of mind. As he rode up the drive, however, he saw two carriages waiting at the front door.

"Visitors!" he said to himself. "I can't be denied, then;" and he jumped off and rang the bell courageously.

In the hall he met the two Miss Gillinghames.

"Are you going?" he inquired, rather crestfallen, for he thought there was safety for him in numbers.

"We are," replied Bee Gillinghame, pointing back over her shoulder at the drawing-room door. "Lady Catherine is in there."

"I don't mind Lady Catherine."

"Oh, don't you? Well, I hope you'll have a pleasant call," put in Augusta Gillinghame. "I've had enough of Mr. Hunks."

"Comin' out huntin' to-morrow?" asked Bee. "Hours are gettin' quite late now. We meet at eight o'clock—Little Morchard Gorse. Plenty of cubs."

"Perhaps," said Sir Hubert. "I shall see"; and he passed on into the drawing-room.

A little man with grey mutton-chop whiskers was standing with Mr. Marshall before a cabinet of Japanese curios, and a big florid woman with a loud voice sat on the largest chair in the room talking to Lady Lorrimer, who was entertaining her in quite her best manner. Effie sat a little apart, silent and *distraite*, but she brightened up as Sir Hubert entered, only to relapse again.

There was a pause in the conversation, a welcoming. Mr. Hunks and Mr. Marshall tore themselves away from the china for a moment in order that the former might be introduced to Sir Hubert, and then Lady Lorrimer led him, as Effie made no sign, over to Lady Catherine.

"How do, how do, Sir Hubert?" she cried in a jolly voice, extending a fat hand. "I remember you as a boy, ye know. Now I've married. Know my husband? Come and see us over at the Abbey some day, will you?"

Lady Catherine was the only child of Lord Loamshire, at whose death the peerage, always a poor one, had become extinct. But Lady Catherine had bestowed herself, the Abbey, and her position, rather late in life, upon Mr. Hunks, a retired Manchester man of great wealth, the very opposite of his wife. She was a jolly, good-natured woman, very plain and fat, and *bourgeoise* in her manner, though looked up to in Loamshire as a great social oracle, for the Earls of Loamshire had lived at the Abbey ever since the Dissolution. Mr. Hunks, on the other hand, essentially a town man in dress and appearance, was devoted to art, a great buyer of pictures, a devotee at Christie and Manson's shrine of *bric-à-brac*, and a collector generally. Lady Catherine cared for none of these things. She loved Loamshire, and county gossip, and short-horns.

But Lady Lorrimer was astute. Fully aware of the social importance of her guest, she was talking stock to her as if she herself, Lady Lorrimer, had farmed all her life.

Sir Hubert saw his opportunity. He went straight across to where Effie sat, and stood over her.

"Good-afternoon, Miss Marshall. I do hope you're better?"

Effie murmured an assent, looking the while so white and piteous that Sir Hubert's heart ached for her. But any conversation there was impossible. True that Lady Catherine's loud voice made noise enough for two, but he felt that Lady Lorrimer's eye was upon them, and he knew of old how sharp her ears were. Then at any moment she might swoop down upon them, and deliver him over to her stout ladyship. While he sought for ways and means, fortune came to his aid.

"Effie," called Mr. Marshall from across the room, "the big *cloisonné* jars—we moved them from here, dear. Did we put them on the shelves in the morning-room? Just look. I want Mr. Hunks particularly to see them."

Effie rose a little unwillingly, and Sir Hubert followed her eagerly through the archway into the next room.

"Let me help you find them—not that I've the remotest idea what a *cloisonné* jar is, though. But, Miss Marshall," he continued hurriedly, and planting himself before her, so that she was forced to stand still and listen, "I want to speak to you——"

She looked round uneasily for escape.

"Do listen to me. I want your advice about a wedding-present I've got to give," he added.

"Oh yes!" assented Effie, looking up, relieved.

"It's just this," he went on, sitting down on a sofa and motioning to her to do the same. She obeyed mechanically. "I've got a great friend going to be married. He's asked me to be his best man. Now, I know you are up in all the latest pretty knick-knacks," he continued, waving his hand round the room, "and I thought before I met him if you could perhaps tell me of things to give him for a wedding-present, and I could let him have his choice, you see, when I meet him in London *on Friday*," he added slowly, and fixing his eyes on her meaningly. "He is coming up on important business, and is pressed for time, and we are to dine at the Naval and Military Club. That's where we always meet and dine, I and Lord Eustace May."

There was a pause. He still looked down on her, while her breath came and went and her colour rose, and at last a happy smile shone over her face and in the eyes she lifted to his. Her mouth parted; she was about to speak, when—

"Effie dear, have you found the vases?" It was Lady Lorrimer's soft drawl from the doorway. "Sir Hubert," she added, smiling at him with lowered lids, "Lady Catherine says she's dying to talk pigs with you."

And to Lady Catherine she handed him over, bound hand and foot, for the rest of the call. But Sir Hubert did not care a bit. He discussed the merits and demerits of black Berkshire, and of liquid manure, and of silos, like a man, and Lady Catherine thought him charming.

But he had his revenge, though. He fired a parting shot at Lady Lorrimer as he bade her good-bye.

"By the by, Lady Lorrimer, a bit of news may interest you. The second of the Wessex girls—Edith, I think her name is—is going to marry my friend, Lord Eustace May. You remember him at Malta. Good-bye, Miss Marshall; and you won't fail me about ideas for wedding-presents, I know," he added, as he grasped her hand.

Effie looked up at him and smiled.

Sir Hubert Erle rode back to Cerne Court in capital spirits.

That evening after dinner he adjourned, as he generally did, to the old school-room, which he had made into a smoking-room and his sanctum. The old furniture was still there to a great extent. Its shabbiness suited the company who shared it with him—Bruce, Chip, Pompey the retriever, etc., and who promptly ensconced themselves on the various chairs and sofas, or lay down in front of the fire. Sir Hubert stood awhile with his back to the mantelpiece, smoking thoughtfully, and rubbing Bruce behind the ear with the point of his toe, much to that animal's satisfaction. At last he moved over to the old writing-table, the only addition he had made to the room, and sitting down, began to write a letter.

He tried three or four times, each time hastily tearing up the paper and beginning afresh. He puffed furiously at his cigar, and then threw it away half finished. Finally the letter was written, and a smile of satisfaction stole over his face as he leant back in his chair and read it over.

"*My* little girl!" he murmured to himself. "*My* little girl!"

Then he rang the bell.

"Let Hopkins ride over to Darfield with this letter for Miss Marshall the first thing to-morrow morning," he said to the footman.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

A TERRIBLE LAST RESOURCE.

LADY LORRIMER sat at breakfast opposite Mr. Marshall, pouring out his coffee—an eminently agreeable-looking *vis-à-vis*, that gentleman could not help confessing to himself, in spite of his lurking distaste to her. Miss Marshall's breakfast had been sent upstairs—a very usual occurrence lately, since her health had been flagging.

"Sweet old farmeress, Lady Catherine," Lady Lorrimer was saying, continuing her comments on the guests of the day before, "knew my father and mother, it appears, and is a friend of my cousin, Lord Wessex. Has asked me to go and stay at the Abbey after Christmas."

"Then you'll have a treat. Hunks's collection *is* a treat——"

Mr. Marshall was interrupted by the entrance of Simmons, bearing a letter on a silver salver.

"For Miss Marshall, sir. Groom ridden over with it from Cerne Court, sir."

Lady Lorrimer flashed a glance on the fatal white envelope. It was quite enough; she recognised the handwriting.

"Send it up to Miss Marshall by Elliott," answered Mr. Marshall, and continued his description of Mr. Hunks's treasures.

But Lady Lorrimer ate two black mushrooms and their respective bits of toast very slowly and deliberately, without speaking. By the time they had disappeared her mind was made up.

"I'll go up and see how the dear child is to-day," she announced, after allowing a decent interval to elapse.

"Do, do," said the father, settling down to his *Times*; and Lady Lorrimer left the room.

She walked slowly upstairs, deep in thought. At the door of Effie's bedroom she paused a moment.

"If the worst comes to the worst, there's nothing else for it. I can but try, and after all I have read about it, it does not seem impossible to succeed."

Then she entered. Effie, in a pale blue dressing-gown, her long fair hair streaming over her shoulders, was sitting up in bed, a barely-touched breakfast-tray pushed away on one side, her eyes glittering brightly, and a flush on each cheek. Even Lady Lorrimer could not help admiring her as she gave her a steady, searching look.

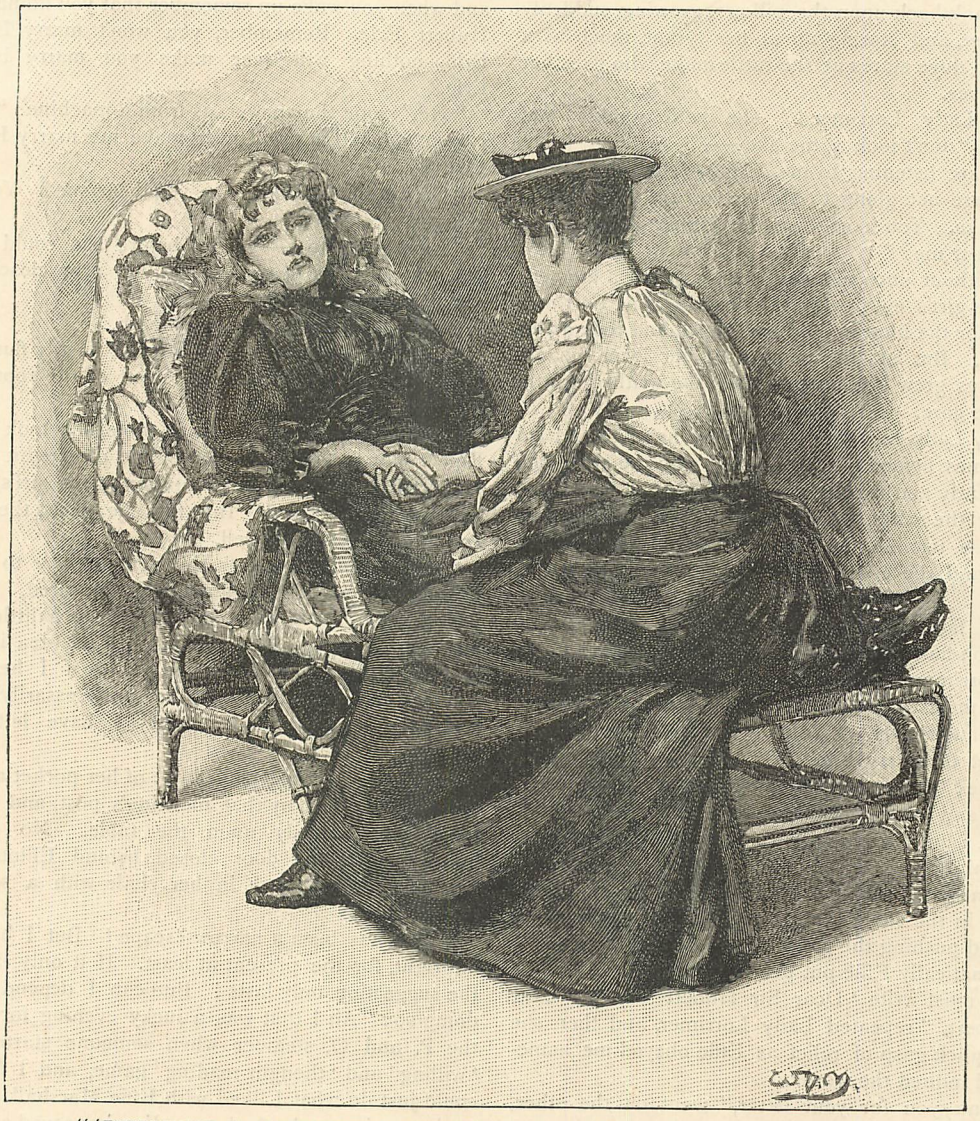
"Oh, Lady Lorrimer!" cried the girl excitedly, half laughing, half crying. "Oh! see here! see here!" and she waved a letter in her hand.

The other leant over the bed and read it.

"DEAR MISS MARSHALL,—I don't seem to get a chance of speaking to you, and I must ask you something. I'm a bad hand at letters, but I want to tell you that I love you with all my heart—which you *must* know already—and will you be my wife? Answer me yes, my own darling little Effie, and my whole life shall be spent in trying to make you happy.

"Your devoted

"HUBERT C. ERLE."



"'EVERYTHING IS ALTERED NOW—EVERYTHING IS OVER!' AND SHE MOANED" (*p.* 670).

Effie threw her arms ecstatically round Lady Lorrimer's neck, burying her head in her shoulder.

"Oh! what have I done that I should be so happy, so happy?" she sobbed.

Lady Lorrimer drew a long breath, and her lips closed tighter than was their wont.

"The worst *has* come," she said to herself. "It has got to be done."

She drew a little writing-table with its accessories

up to the bedside, and sat herself down on the edge of the bed, facing Effie, and taking her hand.

"Listen, Effie," she began, very slowly and softly, looking at her steadily with wide-open steely-grey eyes. "Listen. I want to talk to you. Calm yourself, calm yourself; do you hear?" she went on, passing her hand over her forehead; "and attend to me."

Effie sank back upon the pillows, growing suddenly quite quiet, and staring up at her tyrant, much as a fascinated dove stares at the rattlesnake who fixes her with its eyes.

"Oh, Lady Lorrimer!" she said weakly and dreamily, "don't look at me like——"

"You are listening to me, Effie—listening to me? No, you are not going to sleep; you are wide awake, wide awake. You have to answer Hubert Erle's letter, do you hear me?"

And without once removing her gaze for a moment from the girl's eyes, with one hand Lady Lorrimer reached for the blotting-pad and paper, and took a pen with ink. But at the mention of her lover's name Effie's eyes grew bright again, and she writhed a little under the gaze.

Quietly Lady Lorrimer waved one hand to and fro a few times before her eyes, while with the other she began gently and regularly to rub the top of her head, throwing the while all the power of her strong will into those terrible grey eyes of hers, till with the tension and the effort the blood left her compressed lips.

Effie's face grew deadly white too, and all the expression faded out of her eyes, which looked up to Lady Lorrimer, fixed, staring, and stony.

"You must write to him," Lady Lorrimer continued after a time, slowly. "You do not love him; you do not want to marry him. You hear me? you understand me?" she went on in a low, but firm voice, rubbing and staring all the while.

"Yes, I understand," answered poor Effie, in a most unnatural tone.

"Then write, write; do you hear?" her tormentress went on in the same even tones, placing a pen in her hand and pushing the paper before her.

Automatically Effie put pen to paper.

"You must write 'Dear Sir Hubert'—write 'Dear Sir Hubert,'" repeated Lady Lorrimer, and then she gave a quick gasp of relief as Effie obeyed mechanically, and indited the words.

"Thank you for your letter," went on the other, imperceptibly ceasing her rubbing now that she saw the hypnotic state was complete; "but I fear that—you have misunderstood—my feelings—towards you," she went on dictating, while Effie, slowly, and with slight difficulty, wrote on with eyes that seemed not to see.

"I am sorry—to have—misled you and—encouraged hopes—I cannot realise—but I do not love you—I cannot marry you. Now sign. Sign yourself 'Yours very sincerely.' Sign your name, 'Effie Marshall.' Now listen. You hear me? you quite understand me? Remember, you do not like Hubert Erle—you do not love Hubert Erle—you will not marry Hubert Erle. Answer me."

"I do—not love—Hubert Erle—I will not marry Hubert Erle," repeated the poor girl automatically, staring vacantly in front of her.

Lady Lorrimer hastily withdrew the letter, and then placed her hand on Effie's head.

"Now go to sleep, do you understand? Go to sleep, and when you wake up remember that you do not love Hubert Erle. Remember, you won't marry Hubert Erle—nothing will ever make you marry Hubert Erle."

"No," came the answer, as from a machine; "when I wake up nothing will ever make me marry Hubert Erle."

"Go to sleep, Effie. Do you hear me? You are going to sleep now."

"I am going to s——" but before she could finish her sentence her head drooped, her eyes closed, and she slumbered soundly.

Lady Lorrimer drew a long breath.

"Ah!" she murmured. Then she hastily flung the quilt around the girl, and stole out of the room into the adjacent boudoir.

Seating herself at the writing-table, she took one of Effie's monogramed envelopes, and directed it to Sir Hubert Erle in a very fair imitation of the girl's rather weak, unformed hand. Into this she placed the letter, and then she rang the bell.

"Miss Marshall wishes this sent *at once* to Cerne Court," she told Effie's maid, who appeared. "And, Elliott, Miss Marshall is going to sleep a little now; her head is getting bad. Bring her beef-tea in here at eleven, and I will let you know if I hear her stirring, so as not to arouse her unnecessarily. You understand? I shall be here. I have letters to write."

And Lady Lorrimer pulled out of her pocket a batch she had received by that morning's post, and spread them ostentatiously upon the table. No sooner, however, had the door closed behind Elliott than she flung herself back in her chair with a satisfied yawn.

"That has been a narrow escape! But I hope it's all right, for the present at least. If it only lasts—if the suggestion only lasts! But can I depend on its doing so? Ah! that was a lucky evening for me on the P. and O. steamer when someone started that 'willing' and 'thought-reading' game, and I found I could just do what I liked with Effie Marshall. What a chance it was! And now I've improved upon it, strengthened it, the question is if I can keep it up. The danger is averted for the moment. I have breathing-time. And indeed I need it," she continued bitterly to herself, as she opened and read some of her letters. "All the duns seem down on me at once—even Moses Moss, who ought to know me and trust me by now. Wait till I am Lady Erle, you old sinner, and you shall write me more polite letters than this. When I am Lady Erle—ah, *when!* If I could but just 'will' Hubert as I have 'willed' that child! I did once, though, but in a different way, of course.

No one *could* have been more devoted. A man, too, does not get over a *grande passion* like that all in a few months. Courage, Lilah; the game's worth the candle!" she added, with a thin little unpleasant smile.

———

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCES.

"I DO call it most unreasonable of Marjorie, most inconsiderate to my feelings of her, too," sighed Mrs. Aston, as she looked out of the bay window in the misty gloaming of the autumn afternoon, and watched Sir Hubert Erle and Marjorie go off together up towards the village. The former had called in to speak to her on his way from Farmer Smith about a certain promising colt, and found Marjorie with her things on, starting for a missionary-work party at old Mrs. Minchin's. "If she'd take half as much trouble and be half as nice about her own love affairs as she is about other people's! I'm sure Sir Hubert and that little Miss Marshall ought to be very grateful to her. But she's not a bit grateful to *me* for all I try to do for her with Mr. Adams; and really, the way that poor young man does come and pour out his grievances to me about her would touch a heart of stone. But indeed, sometimes I begin to think that Marjorie has no heart at all," sighed the mother, in her ignorance.

Other folk, too, commented upon the pair as they strolled up the village street. Nurse Merton peeped at them over her blind as she sat drinking her tea, Mr. Adams, who had looked in upon her, affably taking a cup. That young man was also due shortly at Miss Minchin's work-party, there to read aloud while the farmers' daughters, the village shopkeeper's wife, and the "upper ten" of Cerne generally, worked together.

"Deary now!" said the old nurse, smiling. "There they go. Bless me! what a handsome couple they are!"

"Who go? Who are?" asked the rector, with slight irritation in his tone, which was fast becoming chronic with him.

"Why, Master Hubert and——"

The rector had risen and looked out too.

"Pshaw!" he exclaimed, turning away. "I should have thought you knew better than to gossip about 'Master Hubert,' as you call him, Mrs. Merton. There's too much of attending to one's neighbours' affairs in the village, as it is."

"I'm with you there, sir, and no mistake. If, now, among your new guilds and unions, and what not, you'd start a ''Sociation for Minding One's Own Business,' you may put me down as fust member. But, lor bless you, sir! that ain't no gossip. Why, I've see'd *that* a-goin on ever since Miss Marjorie could walk—no, afore that either," she laughed. "Why, I mind as if it were yesterday how Master Hubert would worry at me to let him carry her or wheel her pram."

The rector frowned a little over these reminiscences: to him not agreeable hearing.

"Tut! tut! Mrs. Merton; mere children's friendship kept up. I do hear something about Sir Hubert and a young lady across the river, though."

"Well, sir, people will talk, and you can't help hearing gossip, even if you don't listen, can you, sir?" replied the old woman, with a sly smile at the rector.

"And a most suitable match, Mrs. Merton," he returned decidedly. "Miss Marshall is very charming, and we want a lady at the Court."

"Amen to you again, sir, over that. But the Court isn't the only house in the parish as would be the brighter for——"

"I'm afraid I must be running off now, Mrs. Merton," interrupted the rector, rising hastily. "I shall keep Miss Minchin waiting. So good-evening to you; and many thanks for your good cup of tea."

And Mr. Adams hurried off, feeling, in spite of the forced smile he wore, more irritable and dissatisfied than ever.

He would have been easier in his mind, though, could he have overheard what had passed between Sir Hubert and Marjorie Aston.

"I felt I couldn't go away and not tell you," began the former, when they had got clear of the Grange.

"Go away!" gasped Marjorie, looking sharply at him.

"Yes; and I'm going away to-morrow morning by the first train. I have a friend, Eustace May, coming to town from Ireland, and I shall run up and wait for him. Then, probably, after settling up here a little, I shall go abroad for some time, for the winter."

"Abroad, Sir Hubert?"

"Yes, perhaps snipe-shooting in Albania. I've always wanted to shoot snipe in Albania; and, to tell the truth, Marjorie, I *must* get away from here."

"But—Effie?"

"Marjorie, that's all over; she won't have me!" he said slowly, and strode on, his eyes bent dejectedly on the ground.

Marjorie kept pace with him with difficulty. A tumult of thoughts rushed through her mind. There was a long silence.

They had turned out of the lane into the by-road, and thence into the village street, ere Sir Hubert seemed to remember again that Marjorie was with him.

"Forgive me," he said, "but I'm a bit knocked out of time with this business. I didn't expect—I made *so* sure—too sure. That sweet child is too good for me, too far above me; that's what it is. I was a presuming, conceited fool!"

"Oh, Sir Hubert, don't say that!" replied Marjorie gently. "I felt sure, too, and I tried all I could to help——"

"I know you did, Marjorie; I know you did. You're a real friend—you're a brick, Marjorie! It can't be helped now. I was a fool—that was all."

And again he walked on fast and silent, Marjorie utterly at a loss what to say, what to think. For once in her life she felt it a positive relief when Mr. Adams caught them up at the corner. The young squire and

"THE OTHER LEANT OVER THE BED AND READ THE LETTER" (*p.* 673).

the rector had not too much in common, and at this moment Sir Hubert was in no sort of humour to make himself agreeable to anyone. He bade Marjorie and Mr. Adams a hasty adieu, and disappeared through his own gates. But Mr. Adams, on his side, found Marjorie a less sympathetic companion than usual, so *distraite* and absorbed was she.

The next morning Miss Aston drove down to Great Morchard Station to fetch a Stores parcel. Waiting in the yard was the Darfield carriage, and standing on the platform, waiting for the train for Loamhampton, were two people. One was Mrs. Bucknall, the other a thin, elderly gentleman, in great coat and tall hat, with the Darfield footman hovering in the rear.

Mrs. Bucknall ran up to Marjorie with an anxious expression.

"Isn't this dreadful news from Darfield, Miss Aston?"

"I don't know—I've not heard. Not Effie?" stammered Marjorie, alarmed.

"Indeed, indeed yes! It's dreadful. She's been suddenly taken ill."

"Worse? She's not been well lately."

"No, no; some sudden, mysterious, and alarming attack. I don't quite understand what."

"Oh, Mrs. Bucknall!"

"Mr. Bolus telegraphed for Sir Luke Lancet last evening. That's him," and she nodded towards the gentleman in the tall hat. "He's stayed the night at Darfield—think of the expense! how alarmed Mr. Marshall must be!—and I hear he thinks badly of her."

"But what's the matter, Mrs. Bucknall?"

"That's exactly what nobody seems quite to know, including, I believe, the great man yonder himself. It appears Miss Marshall was not well yesterday morning——"

"One of her headaches?"

"Perhaps. She stayed in bed to breakfast, and after answering her letters, tried to rest and sleep a little before getting up; but when her maid went to rouse her at eleven o'clock with some food, they could not wake her. Both she and Lady Lorrimer became very frightened—thought she was dead at first, I believe—and called Mr. Marshall, who nearly went out of his mind with anxiety, I'm told, and Bolus was galloped for. She wasn't dead. It was a sort of catalepsy, he said."

"What on earth is that?"

"Oh! don't ask *me!* A sort of stupor, looking like death, I believe. She lay like that for hours. Poor Mr. Marshall, in the most awful state of mind, sent for Lancet. She came round somewhat in the afternoon, and got some food down."

"That's hopeful, isn't it? But how is she now? Do you know?"

"I'm told in a very queer state—half comatose. It's all her head and her nerves."

"Poor darling! She is *so* excitable!"

"Oh, it's a dreadful business! I'm so sorry for poor Mr. Marshall. He's just wrapped up in that girl."

"I wonder—do you know—do you think Sir Hubert Erle has heard of this?" asked Marjorie hesitatingly.

"Ha! indeed. To be sure! Now I come to think about it, I fancy not. He went to London by the first train this morning. The canon saw him at the station, and he would have been sure to have mentioned it. Poor fellow! it'll be sad news for him—a great blow, I fear. He was very sweet on Effie, and I rather fancied she liked him, didn't you think so, Miss Aston?"

"Perhaps," assented Marjorie.

"Well, well, there's an end to all that now, poor child!"

"How do you mean, Mrs. Bucknall?"

"Why, that sort of disease does not get any better. It may not kill her immediately, I fancy, but it increases with age. Anyhow, marriage is out of the question now for Effie Marshall. Oh! there's the train. Good-morning, Miss Aston. I fear this has been a shock to you also, my dear?"

But Marjorie was choking, and could find no voice to answer, and drove back to Cerne half-blinded with tears.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

SIR HUBERT HEARS THE TRUTH.

ONLY a week ago! thought Hubert Erle sadly, as he rode up the drive to Darfield Hall and entered the house. Only a week ago, and what a change!

The house seemed strangely quiet and deserted, but Lady Lorrimer was "at home." She was sitting down in the morning-room among the *cloisonné* vases and the *phulkarris*, and gave an involuntary little start as Sir Hubert Erle was announced.

"*Déjà!*" she said to herself, with secret exultation.

"I heard you were still here," began Sir Hubert dejectedly, his usually cheery face sadly overcast, "and I felt I *must* come over and see you."

"Yes, I'm still here," replied Lady Lorrimer, ignoring the latter part of his sentence. "There is a hitch about the little flat I'm taking in town for the winter, and some Brighton friends I was going to have put me off for a little on account of illness, and so Mr. Marshall most kindly said would I stay on here for a few days if it suited me. You got my letter?"

He nodded gravely, lying back in a large arm-chair, his legs outstretched before him, a weary look on his face.

"I felt I must write myself. I could not bear that you should hear the news from a—a stranger."

"It was very kind of you, Lilah," he replied wearily.

"It's been an awful time, I can tell you! But for the fact that poor Mr. Marshall was nearly wild with anxiety, and threw so much on me, I think I should have broken down myself. It was all so sudden—such an awful shock!"

She was leaning on the arm of her chair, opposite him, half-shading her face with one hand, and gazing mournfully into the fire as she spoke, in her low soft drawl.

"I can understand that. You—you found her—you thought she was dead——"

"I thought she was dead!"

There was a very natural ring in her voice just then.

"But what must it have been to *you?*" she added, lifting her eyelids to him. "My *poor* Hubert!"

He groaned aloud. There was a silence.

"But I wanted to see you—to hear," he resumed presently.

"Oh, I get news daily. The maid writes—Mr. Marshall writes——"

"*She* was so fond of you," he put in gently, with a sad smile.

"But there is not much to hear. Sir Luke Lancet has taken the case well in hand—is much interested. Then they have one or two specialists, I hear. They are trying all sorts of things—galvanism, massage—but it's all quite hopeless, I fear!"

Sir Hubert got up—he was too harassed to sit still—and leant against the mantelpiece, looking down into the fire.

"But she is so young—she may outgrow——" he put in, turning round eagerly to her. Lady Lorrimer shook her head.

"Not in her case."

"Not in her case? What do you mean? Explain."

"Her mother, I mean," replied the other, leaning her head on her hand, and again studying the burning logs.

Sir Hubert made a step and stood over her.

"Her mother? I don't understand."

"Oh! didn't you know? Poor Mrs. Marshall: it's a dreadful story!"

"Tell me."

"Why, Effie's mother is—is——"

"I thought she was dead *years* ago!" he exclaimed.

"No, no," replied Lady Lorrimer, shaking her head. "But Effie was always told that. It would never have done for her to suspect the truth. Mrs. Marshall is shut up—in an asylum; she has been a lunatic ever since Effie's birth—neurotic hysteria, I think they call it!"

Hubert sank down in his chair again, his elbows on his knees and his face buried in his hands.

Lady Lorrimer rose, and kneeling on the fender-stool, close to him, put the fire together a little.

"Of course, the chances of Effie's escaping have always been small," she went on in a low voice. "That sort of thing's hereditary, I'm told. Poor Mr. Marshall has been watching the girl like a cat watches a mouse—everything has been done for her—sea-voyage—quiet country life—he hoped and trusted—that the evil might be staved off, combated—outgrown—but all in vain. It has come suddenly—and with these fearful cataleptic symptoms. Sir Luke doesn't think there's a chance of recovery for her! She may linger—may improve a bit—but—no real recovery!"

A low moan came from behind those hands—the moan of a strong man in his agony.

Lady Lorrimer sank down on the fender-stool at his feet, and looked up at him tenderly.

"Oh, Hubert! Hubert!" she whispered, "I can't bear to see you so! Can't I say—do *some*thing—to help—to comfort?" she added, laying a hand on his arm.

He pulled himself together with a mighty effort, and found his voice.

"Nothing, Lilah," he answered hoarsely.

"It is so hard to see you suffer so!" she whispered again, after a pause.

He lifted his face to her, and looked down upon her with pained, tired eyes.

"You don't understand, Lilah. I—I—loved her——"

The other let her head suddenly droop.

"I—I—asked her to marry me——"

"Hubert!" it was she who moaned now. He looked at her for a second sadly. But she lifted her head with a little bitter smile.

"Go on; Hubert. Don't mind me. I—I'm a fool——"

"Never, Lilah—not if it pains you——"

"Go on; I like to hear all that concerns *you!*"

"There is no more to tell. She said she wouldn't marry me."

"Brave of her! She may have had an intuition—an inkling of her fate——"

"She said I had misunderstood—that she didn't care for me," he continued, staring vacantly at the fire.

"Perhaps," said the other slowly, "these very young girls—not over-strong-minded—they don't know their own minds—we women often don't, Hubert;" and she sighed and looked up at him under her lids, a long soft look.

He hardly seemed to heed, still staring straight before him.

"Anyhow, it's all over now, Lilah! But I wanted to tell you all——"

"We are such—old friends," said she.

"Yes, indeed;" and he did look at her now, at the face upturned so close to his: "we are. Do you know," he added, in a sudden change of tone, "you *can* be very gentle and sympathetic if you like, Lilah?"

She gave a little bitter laugh.

"Which shows how little you know, Hubert! You have thought me cruel—heartless; how little you know—you, who call yourself my friend!"

"I know you've been very sweet and nice over this awful business, Lilah," he answered simply, looking at her quite frankly. "You've done me good, even though you have told me—the truth."

"Thank you, Hubert," she said, quite low. He was looking down upon her a moment curiously, as if he were going to speak, when the door opened, and Simmons stalked in with the tea-table. Lady Lorrimer abruptly busied herself poking the fire.

To both, the butler seemed an age arranging the tea paraphernalia and the hot muffins, and lighting up the kettle.

When he had left them in peace, Sir Hubert asked across the teacups:

"You will let me hear, Lilah? You understand that *now*, after what I have told you (and that is why I wanted to tell you); I cannot hear anything at first hand."

"I will write," she said, "if there is any change."

"What are you going to do, Lilah?"

"I? oh! I'm sure I don't quite know! Drift, I suppose! When one is alone in the world and poor, one does a deal of drifting;" and she laughed bitterly again.

"Don't talk like that, Lilah," he put in deprecatingly. "That's not your real self."

"Perhaps not. It's what life has made me, eh, Hubert?"

"I don't like to hear you talk like that, Lilah."

"Because you have caught me this afternoon for the minute with the mask off, like a fool I was!"

"Lilah!"

"No, no; I must just *drift* on. There is nothing else possible. I shall begin by drifting to the Warringtons' at Brighton," she added lightly.

"And after?"

"Perhaps," she smiled, with a shrug, looking across at him under her long lashes, "perhaps, over to the black Berkshire and the Shorthorns, and the *bric-à-brac* at the Abbey."

"I was going away—abroad—I felt I *must* get away. But there is a hitch. My sister Irene, Lady Edward (the wife of the political man), wants to come down to Cerne for a little. The precious baby has

had the whooping-cough (it's the heir, you know, to the peerage), and she wants to give it a country change. You're not afraid of whooping-cough?"

She shook her head.

"Then why not come over to Cerne a bit, after the Abbey? I shall stay on now for the winter, hunting. You'll get on with Irene and the baby and the League; you always get on with everybody. Think it over;" and he got up and looked about for his hat.

"You'll think it over?" were his last words as he left the room.

"Yes," she answered gently, "I'll think it over!"

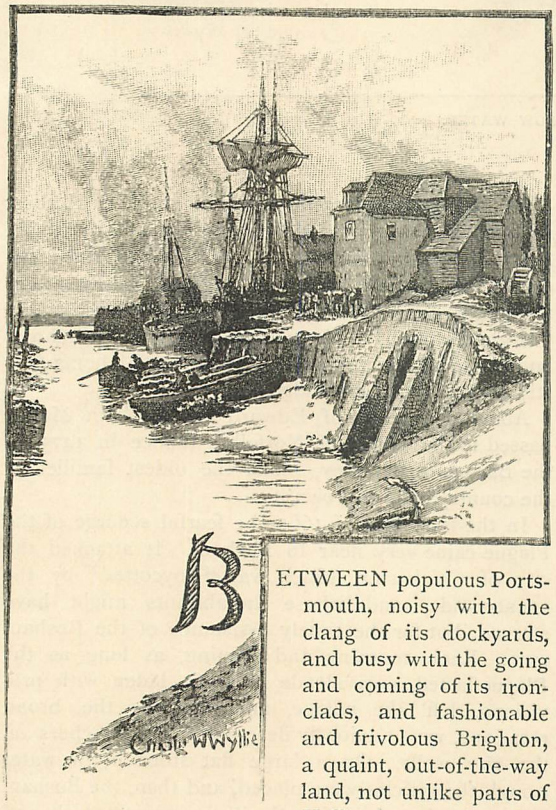
From the window she watched him mount, and ride down the drive.

"No fear," she laughed to herself, "*I'll* think it over! Lilah," she added, "methinks you've not done badly for one afternoon's work. He'll be *very* easy to manage, and, after all, I really am fond of him!"

But Sir Hubert was looking in the direction of the little garden where Effie had given him a rose, and his sad thoughts were again of her.

END OF CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

AN ARTIST'S HAUNT.



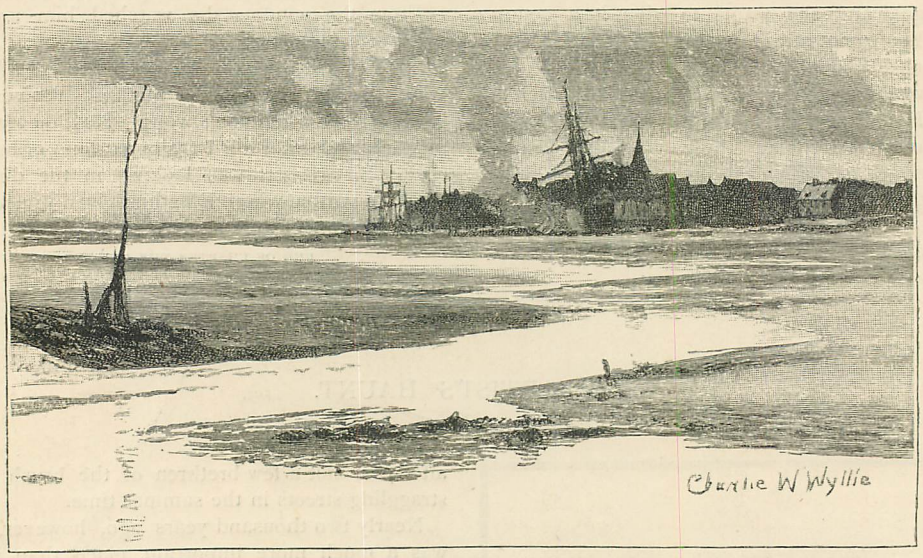
OLD MILL AND QUAY.

BETWEEN populous Portsmouth, noisy with the clang of its dockyards, and busy with the going and coming of its ironclads, and fashionable and frivolous Brighton, a quaint, out-of-the-way land, not unlike parts of Holland, stretches between the bold range of the South Downs and the Channel. Over shallow bars, up winding creeks and land-locked estuaries, lazy tides creep over miles of mud, or chafe against the low *dunes* and long sand spits of the Sussex coast. Inland lies a country of "broad meadow lands," dotted with red-tiled villages and the conical spired churches so characteristic of the county.

On such an estuary lies Bosham, undisturbed by the rush of the Goodwood traffic or the excursionists to Bognor and Littlehampton, though only a mile from the railway. It is an "artist's nook" indeed, and year after year not a few brethren of the brush haunt its straggling streets in the summer time.

Nearly two thousand years ago, however, Bosham was a much more important place than it is now. Three miles off across the meadows was Regnum (Chichester), Vespasian's Aldershot, and full of Roman remains at this day. On the site of the present church of Bosham, he built a basilica or court house, and the bases of the pillars of the present church are undoubtedly Roman. Quantities of Roman tiles, bricks, and pottery, have been found under the nave, and are to be seen in the walls. When St. Wilfred began to christianise West Sussex in 681, the monastery at Bosham, mentioned by Bede, was one of the centres

THE MANOR HOUSE.



THE CREEK AT LOW WATER.

of missionary effort. The brethren were of the order of St. Benedict, and the rules were very strict. In the map of the MS. Saxon Chronicle, Bosham is one of the only five places marked in Sussex. A little later it was the residence of Canute, one of whose children was buried in the church, which it is not improbable that he built. The church and manor, however, passed from the Archbishopric of Canterbury to Earl Godwin, Canute's son-in-law, by a shameless piece of cheating. The rapacious Earl, whose possessions were already very large, went with an armed band to pay his court to the Archbishop, and to ask for the kiss of peace.

"Da mihi Boseam," begged the kneeling Earl.

The Archbishop, thinking he said, "Basium," replied—

"Do tibi Basium," whereupon the crafty Earl, with profuse thanks, hurried off to take possession of the manor of Bosham. He built a hall there, probably on the site of the old manor house, on the north of the church, for the moat remains, and a part of the material of the manor house is of great antiquity.

Harold, the unlucky, his son, succeeded to the whole tract of country round Bosham. He figures in the Bayeux tapestry as embarking, hawk on wrist, from the Manor of Bosham for Normandy. In the background is a church, proving that at that date, at least, there was a Saxon church at Bosham. In Domesday Book we find much mention of Bosham, one of the most richly endowed foundations in England, and one of powerful influence. The little hermitage of the Scottish monk Dieül, the co-labourer of Wilfred, had grown into a place of more importance than Arundel itself, for a feodary book of the fourteenth century, in the Duke of Norfolk's possession, mentions that six fairs were held yearly at Bosham, while at Arundel only three.

Becket's private secretary and biographer, Herbert de Bosham, was so called from the place of his birth. After his master's murder he withdrew to Italy, becoming archbishop, and then cardinal, and a tomb in the southern aisle of Bosham church is pointed out as "Herbert's tomb." He was a distinguished scholar and his most popular work, "Vita Sancti Thomæ," is still preserved at Cambridge.

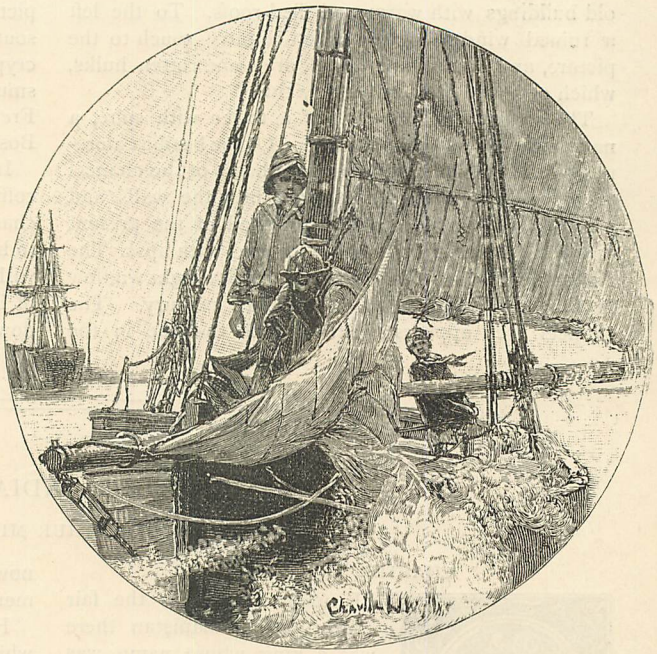
About the reign of Edward IV. Bosham Manor passed to the Dukes of Norfolk; thence in 1475 to the Barons of Berkeley, one of the oldest families in the country, who still own it.

In the fatal year of 1665 the fearful scourge of the Plague came very near to Bosham. It attacked the city of Chichester, which was "boycotted" by the country-side, and whose inhabitants might have starved, but for the timely assistance of the Bosham men. Each morning and evening, as long as the Plague lasted, a cavalcade of carts, laden with provisions, left the village, and, crossing the broad meadows, were anxiously descried by the watchers on the city walls. On a large flat stone by a water trough the articles were placed, and then, the Bosham men retreating, the infected citizens approached, and carried off the provisions, placing the money for them in the trough.

South of the church are some remains of the ancient college of Bosham, notably, a thick wall pierced by a pointed doorway. Within the enclosure was dug up the head of a gigantic figure of St. Christopher, now in the bishop's palace at Chichester. The college was dissolved by Henry VIII., but the stalls of the prebends are still to be seen in the chancel, carved with a *fleur-de-lis*.

The traveller who, approaching Bosham by water, over the harbour bar, past Thorney Island and its Norman church half hidden in the elms, and up the

winding channel, drops anchor in Bosham Deep, sails over the Bell Hole, a worn, circular hole at the confluence of the Chichester and the Bosham channels, and which figures in the legend of the lost bell of Bosham. The monks, tradition says, had waxed lax in their duties, and their patron saint, St. Nicolas, to punish them, let the Norsemen loose upon them. The Vikings sailed up to Bosham Deep—mark a fen-country name here, as also in Thorney Isle—and plundering the village and the monastery, carried off with them, as a trophy, the tenor bell. No sooner were their dragon-prowed galleys espied sailing away down the estuary than the penitent monks fell on their knees in the church, and caused a thanksgiving peal to be rung from their Saxon tower with the remaining seven bells. But lo, and behold ! from down across the harbour rang the tenor bell in answer ; and, just as they were opposite Ichenor Point (mark the Danish ending of "nor," as in Bognor, close by) the horrified Vikings saw their galley open, and the bell descend into the water, the ship closing up behind it. The monks prayed the saint to restore them their bell, and he consented, in a dream, if they could find a team of milk-white oxen to draw it up from the water. An attempt was made, but failed, as one of the oxen had a black hair in his tail. So, still to this day, there are only seven bells in Bosham steeple, but, if you are sailing over the bell-hole when they ring, you will hear the lost tenor bell answering from below—so the legend goes. The truth of the matter is, that there is a remarkable echo at Ichenor Point ; and, in addition, it is a well-known fact in acoustics that, if you strike a third and a fifth, the echo of the octave follows.



BRINGING UP.

Seen from the water Bosham Church stands beautifully surrounded by the dark yews of the churchyard, through which runs the clear brook that turns the mill. The tall spire is backed by the green mass of the South Downs about Goodwood, rising away to the north, and the little quay is fringed by picturesque

AT THE BACK OF THE STREET.

old buildings with warm red-tiled roofs. To the left a ruined windmill gives a fen-country touch to the picture, and, in the foreground, are some rotten hulks, which sink and float with every tide.

The church itself consists of a tower with spire, a nave, side aisles, and a chancel. Of the basilica aforementioned the only traces are the bases of the chancel arch, and the materials worked into the walls and arches. The Saxon church consisted of the present tower, the present nave, and a chancel with apse. The aisles, the windows of the chancel, the five-light window at the east end, are of the twelfth century. The chancel arch appears identical with the one in the picture of Harold in the Bayeux tapestry. In the southern aisle, beyond Herbert's tomb, is a small crypt, not uncommonly used as a storehouse in the smuggling days, not long past, when much good French brandy found its way over Chichester bar to Bosham.

In 1865, when the church was restored, the stone coffin of a child was found just at the spot under the chancel arch where Canute's daughter was supposed to have been buried. There is a curious parish chest with a quaint lock; but the invaluable parish archives of Bosham monastery, dating from the time of Canute downwards, were wantonly destroyed.

ANOTHER INDIAN TALE.

BY ARTHUR MILTON.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

ONCE upon a time in the fair country of Gumanistan there was a king whose name was Ahmed Khan. He loved his people very much, and did all he could to make them happy. He had a daughter whose name was Zainab. Everything in this country of Gumanistan was very fair. There were rich fields which waved their golden heads in obeisance to the soft breezes that blew across them. There were gardens filled with all the fruits one could wish for which grew most luxuriantly, needing very little attention from the gardeners. These gardens were watered by fountains which issued from the everlasting snows on the tops of the neighbouring mountains and rippled down their wooded slopes, finding their way at last into the river which flowed on to refresh the sunburnt plains hundreds of miles away. But though everything was so lovely the good king, Ahmed Khan, used to say, "The fairest jewel in my crown is my child Zainab. The fairest flower in all my gardens is the daughter who is grown so like her mother—peace be upon her soul!" He always spoke of his wife with this prayer, for she died when Zainab was born.

For this daughter he had one thought, and that was he wished to see her happily married and settled before his death. He had been wedded to Zainab's mother late in life, and though he had had many other wives, as was the custom in his country, this girl was his only child.

And now that she was grown up, his great wish was continually this: "Let me see my daughter settled with someone who will take care of her and love her when I am gone."

One day he was wandering through his gardens in the cool of the day. He had been engaged in listening to the various petitions that had been presented to him by his subjects and giving judgments upon them. And now, tired with his day's work, he was seeking refreshment for mind and body.

He passed down the grove of mango trees, through which a sparkling stream danced merrily, and came to one of his favourite spots, where the waters threw themselves over some rocks in a white cascade and lost themselves beneath the dark bosom of the pool below.

It was a fairy-like place, and it was no wonder that many and many a story of the good deeds of fairies was connected with it. It was always said and thought that this was the special abode of fairies on earth, but that it was only to good people that they ever appeared and spoke. There were some very old verses that the people used to say to one another about this place. They were something like this:—

"Do you wish to meet the fairies?
You must to their glen repair:
Do you wish to see the fairies?
Let your every act be fair:
Would you commune with the fairies?
Let your every word be pure:
Then to Fairyland the fairies
Will your thoughts and soul allure:
There to tell you what the fairies
Of the fate of mortals know,
And to warn you that the fairies
Bring to each his weal or woe.

Close by this beautiful pool of water there was a little nook, shaded by different kinds of trees, where the king often sat down to rest; and now, being unusually tired, he reclined on the grassy bank variegated by wild flowers, which seemed to form a pattern on Nature's carpet.

As he lay there his mind was full of his great thought for Zainab. It was quite heavy on his heart, and he wondered whether he ought to propose to the neighbouring king, his old friend, Rahim Khan, that his son, Mazár Khan, should take his daughter and with her succeed to the kingdom of Gumanistan after his death; and as he thought and thought he gazed at the water leaping and sporting about the rocks. Then, forgetting for a moment his care, he said to

himself, "It is no wonder that this place is said to be the abode of fairies. I could fancy as I see the movements of the water that it is animated by beings of another world." And then he continued: "Why, it is not fancy at all. That which I have always thought to be the white foaming cascade is indeed the most lovely being I ever beheld."

Whether he thought aloud or not he could never tell, but it is quite certain that the beautiful fairy in reply to his thoughts said:

"It is not fancy. This is indeed a portion of my dominions. I am the queen of the fairies. I now demand homage of you, Ahmed Khan whom I appointed as king in this realm of Gumanistan."

The king upon this prostrated himself before the queen, who during her speech had approached quite close to him.

"Now," continued the fairy queen, "I know your anxiety and trouble of mind; and because you have been an upright and good king, giving justice to your people and dealing honourably with your enemies, I am come to help you. My command is this:—

"Who in winter's stream can stand,
Aided not by any hand:
Who from set of sun to rise,
Underneath the star-lit skies
Can the icy flood endure,
He is good, and true, and pure:
He it is whom I decree
Zainab's lord, and only he."

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

"SAHIB, Sahib, how long have you been lying here? It is quite late; the evening dews are falling, and you will be taking cold."

Ahmed Khan was awakened from his visions by these words, which came from the lips of Muhammad Bakhsh, a privileged old servant, who was now very aged, being the king's senior by some fifteen years. He had been an attendant on the king's father, and so he had known Ahmed Khan from the time of his birth. The consequence was he took a sort of fatherly interest in him, and regarded him still almost as a boy.

"Tauba!" exclaimed the king as he realised his situation, "have I been sleeping, Muhammad Bakhsh? I intended to rest for a few moments, and then—and then——"

But Ahmed Khan seemed so confused that the old servant exclaimed:

"Why, what ails you? Have you caught a chill? Is it fever that is coming on? Why is it that you are not more cautious than to go to sleep in that damp place?"

"Hush," replied the king, reverently. "I am well: I was confused for the moment because I had just awakened from Paradise and a command was laid upon me."

Then he repeated all the vision that he had witnessed. "And now," he said, "I must remember the command while it is fresh. Let me think: as you woke me these words were on my lips—

'He it is whom I decree
Zainab's lord, and only he.'

But who was it? There was something about winter and icy floods. Ah, now it is coming back!"

After a time the king was able to repeat the whole to his attendant. Then, as in all domestic matters, he asked his advice.

"Well," said Muhammad Bakhsh, "it is yet four months to winter. I should, if I were you, issue a proclamation throughout Gumanistan, and send copies to the neighbouring kings, that you will give the child in marriage to the first man who is able to fulfil the conditions of the poetess between December 15th and January 15th."

The king thought well over the matter, and came to the conclusion that the practical advice of his old retainer was good. So within a week his messengers were posting all over the country on fleet horses, and envoys with rich presents were sent to the neighbouring kings; all bearing the same message and proclamation that Zainab, the fair and lovely princess, only daughter of Ahmed Khan, the brave, the august ruler of Gumanistan, would be given in marriage to the man who first between the dates of December 15th and January 15th should fulfil the conditions mentioned below.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

AFTER these things the king felt more and more drawn to this fairy glen, and almost every day, after his work was over, he wandered forth by the waterfall.

One day, about three weeks after the proclamation had been issued, Zainab and her father were seated together in this favoured spot. Ahmed Khan had not hidden from his daughter what he had done; and now their thoughts and words naturally turned to the subject which had such absorbing interest for them both.

"My child," said Ahmed Khan, "I am deeply thankful to have received distinct guidance in this matter. Have you, I wonder, anyone in your mind that you would like to win the prize?"

"Oh, father," she replied, "how can I? I am quite happy with you, and I have had no chance of losing my heart yet, but——"

Her sentence was finished by a little shriek, for at that moment she caught sight of a ragged, rough-looking man lurking in the bushes close by them.

"Look, father," she gasped, pointing with her finger. At the same moment the man emerged, and prostrated himself before the king.

"What means this," asked Ahmed Khan, in stern tones, "that you dare to intrude thus on our privacy? Away! away! or I shall call my guard!"

"Pardon me, your Majesty, nourisher of the poor," came the cry of the prostrate man. "Hunger, hunger is my companion, and has been for many days. I knew not that I was trespassing. Knowing your Majesty's goodness, mercy, pity, I did but presume to come and ask for employment that I might eat and live.

"Rise up, man," said the king, relenting, his ever kindly disposition getting the mastery of all else, "rise

up, I say. How is this? Is there a man starving in this our realm of Gumanistan?"

"Nay, sire," replied the man, "I belong not to your Majesty's happy realm; I have come from the far distant country of Gharibistan. I came here hoping to be one of your Majesty's subjects because I had heard of their happy state."

As he stood up in obedience to the king's command he revealed a fine, manly face, with very handsome features, his figure was well set together, his height was rather over six feet. He certainly looked worn with travel and hunger. His features appeared pinched, his clothes were in rags. There was very little of his turban left, and his long hair was very unkempt; and yet he looked up with such a kindly, honest face, and such a light shone from his hazel eyes, that the king's heart was drawn to him, whilst Zainab decidedly blushed beneath his glances.

"Well," said the king, continuing the conversation, "no man shall starve in my dominions, but every man must earn his living. What work can you do?"

"I will do," was the reply, "anything your Majesty may wish."

Ahmed Khan thought for a moment and said:

"Do you understand horses?"

"Ay, your Majesty, I do."

"Then you shall have a trial in my stables in the place of a groom who died a few days ago. What is your name?"

"My name, oh provider of the poor, is Ghulam Muhammad."

"Very well then," said the king: "go to the Strangers' Rest House to-night, and be present to-morrow morning at sunrise to begin your work."

So saying, the king dismissed Ghulam Muhammad from his presence, and then, turning to Zainab, he said—

"It is strange that that man's face should have attracted me so much that I should give him service in this way; but I somehow feel that he is to be trusted."

Ahmed Khan's daughter seemed pleased too at this happy termination to the curious interview.

So Ghulam Muhammad was duly installed in his office. He was always punctual in his attendance, his horse was always the best kept in the stables, he himself seemed always contented and happy, as well as able to please others. He rose very high in the royal favour, for it turned out that he could manage one horse in particular which no other man in the stables had ever been able to ride, and when the king's attendants took part in their favourite sport of tent-pegging, Ghulam Muhammad, mounted on this fiery steed, which had been the terror of all save the old king himself, would time after time triumphantly carry off the peg on the end of his lance. In two or three weeks from the time of his first appearance it would have been impossible to recognise in the stylish servant in his royal livery the poor, ragged beggar who appeared before the king at the Fairy Glen.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

SOON the summer days began to shorten, the snows on the near mountains came lower and lower, wintry blasts swept over the valley. The month of December came, and many, many men arrived from all parts of Gumanistan and neighbouring countries to try to win the hand of the fair Princess Zainab. There were princes, nobles, chiefs, and head men of sections of tribes; there were warriors and great land-holders and many others.

The fifteenth of December came—the first night appointed for the trial. Hundreds of men flocked down to the river as the sun set, and plunged into the wintry stream. Up to their chins they stood, the whole body immersed. The king had set guards to see that all was done fairly. Some poor fellows after five minutes had to yield, so intense was the cold. They came out looking blue and purple, and thoroughly ashamed of themselves.

So it went on. Each quarter of an hour as it passed saw some give up the struggle with winter.

By the time the first watch of the night was past, there were only two men left and the guards could not make out who they were, though they believed that one was named Sharif Khan, a powerful chief, one of Ahmed Khan's own subjects, but they could not recognise the other.

The night wore on; these two seemed to be fighting a fierce duel. Who would first succumb to the cold? As they waited and waited suddenly the guards saw one disappear. It was he whom they believed to be Sharif Khan.

Perfectly exhausted and numbed with the cold, he sank down, choosing rather to die than give up the struggle. One man was left. Would he survive the trial?

Slowly the night passed. The first suspicion of day appeared in the eastern sky. The voice of the muezzin rang out from the neighbouring minarets, "Prayer is better than sleep!" "Prayer is better than sleep!"

Then came the dawn, indeed, and at last up rose the glorious sun from his couch, shedding a golden ray over the head of him who was still persevering and showing what love could do.

"Shabash! Shabash!" was the shout of exultation that greeted the man from those on the river's bank. "You have fulfilled the task nobly. The princess is yours."

Ahmed Khan had himself arrived as the sun appeared, and now commanded the man to come out of the water.

As he came forth, what was the astonishment of all the people when they recognised the groom, Ghulam Muhammad!

On the king's part, however, it was not mere surprise. There was disgust, as he was heard to mutter "A groom? There must be some mistake."

But no: it was Ghulam Muhammad. Not concealing his displeasure, the king turned to his guards, asking—

"Will you swear that this man has fulfilled the conditions I laid down?"

"We will, your Majesty."

Then, turning to the groom, he asked—

"Tell me, man, how did you manage to do what none else could do, not even princes and nobles?"

"Protector of the poor, as I went into the stream I saw a watch fire, on the mountains. I fixed my gaze upon it; I thought all night that fire is not hotter than the love I have for the princess—that fire is not hotter than the love she will bear me if I win her. That love kept out the winter's cold, even in this icy river."

"You have not fulfilled the conditions," replied the king, his disgust for once overcoming his judgment. "You kept yourself warm by that fire. My daughter is not for you."

"Sire," said the groom, "you have the reputation of being a just man. Now you appear but as a tyrant."

"Away with him!" cried the king; "let him no more come into my presence."

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

WHEN Ahmed Khan returned to his palace, he was not in the best mood with himself. He was conscious of having behaved unjustly, and yet he was trying to justify himself.

"AHMED KHAN HAD HIMSELF ARRIVED AS THE SUN APPEARED" (*p.* 685).

He called Muhammad Bakhsh, his old servant, and told him what had happened. He added—

"There is a mistake about the meaning of that bit of poetry:

> 'Who in winter's stream can stand,
> Who the icy flood endure.'

It cannot mean what we supposed. Winter and ice

must mean misfortune or something or other. We have been too hasty in thinking that the meaning is just on the surface. We will think over them again. And now give that groom fellow a thousand rupees, and tell him to go : that will amply repay him for what he has suffered. Fancy giving Zainab to a real beggar!"

Muhammad Bakhsh saw his master was in no humour to be argued with, so he went away, determining at a more convenient time to have a further talk with him.

The day passed. Zainab had, of course, heard all that had occurred. The king shut himself up all day, saying—what was very likely true—that he had a headache.

Now in that country even great ladies were not thought to be above domestic work. All did housework, even princesses. Zainab, like many others, was in the habit of baking her father's bread for every meal. This bread consisted of unleavened flat cakes, called chapaties. The fire-place or oven was on the roof of the house. This also was a custom of Gumanistan.

In the evening Ahmed Khan roused himself from his reverie so far as to feel hungry, and as the daylight was dying he came to Zainab and asked for his bread.

"Your bread, father, is not ready," was her reply.

"How is this?" asked the king. "It is evening, and you have not yet baked my bread! What are you thinking about, child?"

"Father," said Zainab, "the oven is on the roof and the fire is downstairs. When the oven gets hot, I will bake your bread."

"Why, my daughter, are you losing your reason?" he said. "The oven is on the roof, the fire down below. How will it ever be heated?"

"In the same way," she answered quietly, "as Ghulam Muhammad kept himself warm by the fire on the mountain."

"My child, my child, you have convinced me that I am wrong. But what? Am I to give you to a groom?"

"You cannot go against the will of God, father," Zainab replied. "He is the man pointed out by heaven. I love him : I will have no other."

Ahmed Khan upon this sent for Ghulam Muhammad. When he came he said—

"Ghulam Muhammad, I was wrong in what I said. I have done you a great injustice. You have won my daughter. It is the decree of heaven. She is yours."

"Now, your Majesty, call me no longer Ghulam Muhammad, the unknown groom," was the speech that fell on the king's astonished ears. "Call me instead Mazár Khan, Prince of Khushistan. As soon as I heard your Majesty's proclamation I disguised myself and arrived as you saw me; for I wished to see the princess before avowing myself her suitor."

"Shukr! Shukr!" exclaimed the king.

The marriage was solemnised with great pomp, and Prince Mazár Khan and the Princess Zainab lived happily ever after. To the little princes and princesses who were born they loved to tell the story of how their mother was wooed and won.

HOW A WILDERNESS BECAME A GARDEN.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

THE STOCKING OF A SUBURBAN GARDEN.

NOTHING could have been brighter than the crisp Saturday afternoon in October on which John and Alice Smith found themselves bent upon the continuation of the stocking of their garden at Highland Villas. John had come home early from the office, and was looking forward to a good three hours' work of recreation—for "that is what gardening really amounts to," said he to his neighbour over the wall, who about the same time had just turned out bent upon the same business.

"What are you going to be up to to-day," said Charles Robinson, looking over the barrier that divided their domains, as he stood upon a short ladder. "I see, though," continued he, "you are going to fill those two diamond-shaped beds at each corner of your little lawn; what are you going to put in them?"

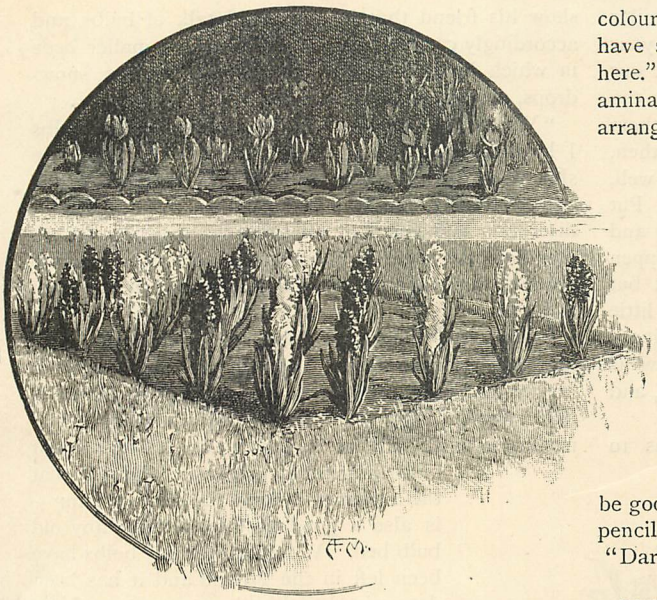
"Mangel-wurzel, and cauliflower," said John, as he was stooping over the beds with his back towards his neighbour, but his shaking shoulders betrayed the mirth of which he was generally brimful.

"Ah, I dare say," said Charles. "Now you be sure and send me some in next April, but I want to have a look at those bulbs in that truck-basket," and suiting the action to the word, he went another step up his ladder, and quietly vaulted over the wall into his neighbour's garden.

"Don't you know, sir, that an Englishman's house is his castle," said John Smith, springing suddenly up with a feigned indignation.

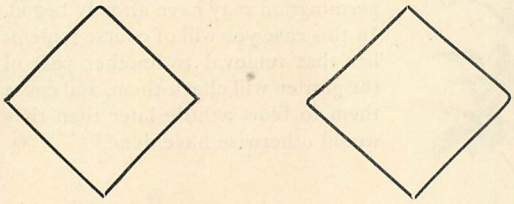
"That may be so, sir," said Charles, "and now you see, I've just carried yours by storm, and call upon you to surrender, and what is more, I think I shall fine you a few of these hyacinth bulbs."

The two friends then—for of late they had become quite intimate, and more especially in the matter of horticulture, began making together an inspection of the bulbs and of the beds which were to receive them.



CHARLES ROBINSON'S IDEAL HYACINTH BED.

Here was the shape of the two beds at the two ends of the lawn:



"For all the world," said Charles Robinson, "they are just the shape of a hatchment, such as one now and then sees on the front wall of a house, or in the chancel of an old parish church."

"Well," said John Smith, more interested by his bulbs than by the comparison which his friend had just drawn, "and I intend to have a pretty March and April flower show in those two beds, but come now and give me your advice as to the colour arrangement, and then, perhaps, I may be able to spare you a few for yourself."

"But first of all," said Charles, thinking himself now called upon to give a small lecture on hyacinths in general and in consequence, not a little gratified at the request of his friend—"First of all, have you taken the precaution to purchase bulbs that all blow at the same time? for only conceive the absurdity of having half a dozen hyacinths in full bloom by the side of half a dozen more that do not blow until their fellows are faded!"

Charles now began to warm into his subject, and continued:

"I am sure there is quite three weeks' difference between the sorts called early and late hyacinths, so that you see when purchasing, the first and most important thing is what I have just named, *uniformity of bloom*. And now, if you will, we can talk about colour arrangement. Let us suppose then that we have six shades of colour, as I think I see you have here." At this point he made a more minute examination of the bulb collection of his friend, and arranged some of them seven in a line. "Well, then, we will have in our row a dark blue in the centre, with a dark red in each corner; then a white next to the dark red, and a light red next to the white. The next row should have a light red in the centre, light blue at the two corners, and dark red next to the light blue, with white on either side of the centre light red. A third row might have a yellow hyacinth at each end, light blue next to the yellow, white in the centre, with a dark red on each side of the white. Now you will notice by this arrangement, that the *same* colours will run *diagonally* and the effect will be good, as seen in this way." Here he took out a pencil and paper to illustrate his lecture.

"Dark red, white, light red, dark blue, light red, white, dark red.

Light blue, dark red, white, light red, white, dark red, light blue.

Yellow, light blue, dark red, white, dark red, light blue, yellow.

"And you may thus keep on varying your design, beginning your *fourth* row with dark blue, your fifth row with light red, and your sixth with white; thus preserving uniformity of colour, and having diagonal lines of the same colour. On the other hand, if you thought this arrangement of *lines* of the *same* colour too formal, you might easily so intersperse them as to have a contrast of colour without formality. A great deal must necessarily depend upon the taste and fancy of the gardener, but, of course, you must avoid having a dark red and a light red next to each other in the same row.

"And now as to the soil and the method of planting, for you must know, John, that I like to exhaust my subject and not to treat it in a half-and-half sort of way. Now first of all, to-day being a bright and crisp sort of day, but one with no frost about, is just the very day for your planting; for only consider, here are your bulbs lying about in the truck-basket on your gravel walk, and perhaps they have been there an hour, and it may be another hour before they are well under the ground. Well, if a sharp frost were going on, your bulbs would probably be seriously affected and some of them fail entirely.

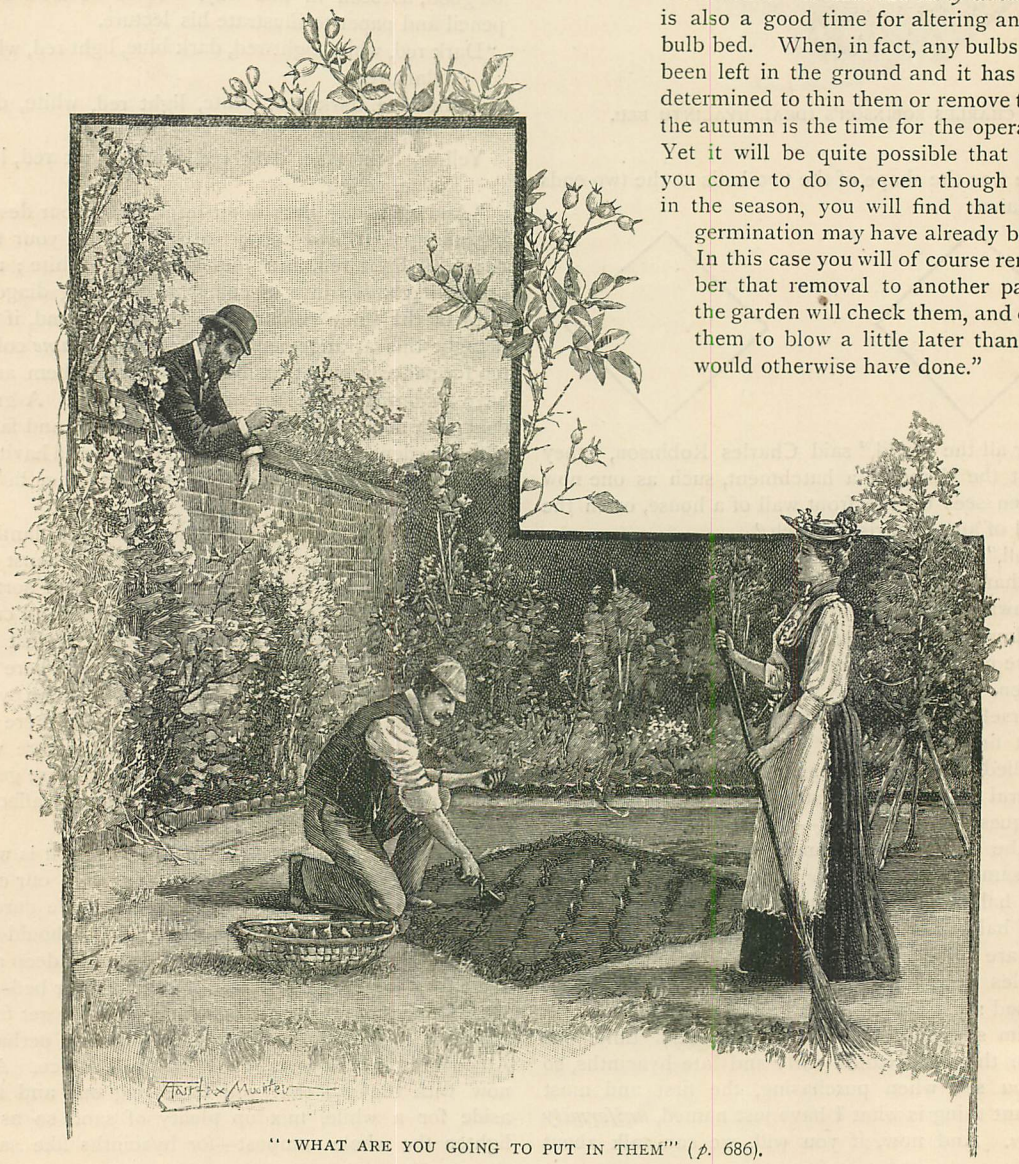
"And then for a preparation of the soil, it is well, though not perhaps absolutely necessary in our case as we have but lately arrived, and our whole garden has been well manured and prepared, but I should say it is the best to dig out the soil, say, a foot deep and some four feet wide. At the bottom of your bed put some decayed cow-dung which you can easily get from the farm over there, or from your milkman perhaps. A couple of inches deep of this stuff will suffice. And now with the soil that you have dug out and laid aside for a while, mix up plenty of sand so as to lighten the whole compost—for hyacinths like sand,

mix well up too with this a small quantity of similar manure and level the whole when you have all your soil back again. And now in this we have to put our bulbs. You can see at once that if your bulbs are too close to the surface, the coming winter will find them out and they would get frost-bitten. Well, then, hyacinths—and for the matter of that, tulips as well, should be placed five inches deep in the soil. Put them in there in the rows as I have described, and leave them to take their chance. Should there happen to be a very severe winter, with, say, much frost but hardly any snow, you might perhaps, have a little litter spread by way of protection, but the ordinary English winter, with the ordinary amount of snow as a *natural* protection, is what we mostly look for, and our bulbs at a proper depth are generally safe."

John Smith here intervened, and was anxious to show his friend that he too could talk of bulbs, and accordingly carried him off to two other smaller beds in which he had already set some crocuses, snowdrops, narcissus, and jonquilles.

"You know, Charles," said he, "these smaller bulbs I have not put in half so deep as you say hyacinths should go: well, some three inches is quite depth enough for the smaller class of bulbs. A good deal of discretion is needful at all times in planting. I remember we were a month ago discussing shrub planting, and then deprecated all planting at too great a depth.

"Crocuses," continued John, "I think look better in small patches rather than in a long line as a border to a bed. The latter way is not at all effective, and indeed, a long yellow line of bloom along a bed is almost ugly. By the way, as we are talking about bulbs in general, you know, Charles, that the autumn—at least the *early* autumn—is also a good time for altering any old bulb bed. When, in fact, any bulbs have been left in the ground and it has been determined to thin them or remove them, the autumn is the time for the operation. Yet it will be quite possible that when you come to do so, even though early in the season, you will find that some germination may have already begun. In this case you will of course remember that removal to another part of the garden will check them, and cause them to blow a little later than they would otherwise have done."



"'WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO PUT IN THEM'" (*p.* 686).

HOW SHE CAME DOWN FROM THE STILTS: AN ALPINE TRAVEL STORY.

THE post had just come in, and I was absorbed in my letters, sitting in the balcony of the Zermatter Hof, Zermatt, whilst Hope, with a dreamy look in her blue eyes, lazily rocked herself to and fro in a large bent-wood chair.

An exclamation on my part aroused her.

"What's up, Molly?" she asked.

"Here's a letter from my old friend Stephen Moore, proposing to join us here for a short while with his friend, Dermot Gwynne. They're both on leave just now."

Hope smiled. I suppose I had spoken excitedly.

"My dear coz," she said, "I really don't know whether I can allow two young men to tack on to our party, especially if the mere thought of it raises such agitation in my sober cousin's breast! Is he a *very* particular friend?"

"He's been my own special boy and friend ever since I was thirteen, and he a middy of fourteen, and we have remained friend—*friends*," I repeated, with emphasis, "ever since."

"And no romance has ever mingled with the friendship?"

"Never," I said positively: "at least, not since he was a boy of sixteen, when he literally idolised me for a short time. But all that's over now, and we understand one another perfectly."

"How did you get to know him?" inquired Hope, with interest.

"We lived next door to each other, and he and his brothers were always climbing over the garden wall to get the tennis-balls they 'skied' over on to our side. Stephen declares I started the acquaintance by shying (as he calls it) a racquet at his head, which strange proceeding took his fancy so immensely that he liked me on the spot. I need hardly say I was never really guilty of such an outrageous breach of good manners."

"Of course not," said Hope. "Is he nice?"

"Excessively so: the nicest man I've ever met. He's now twenty-four, and a lieutenant in the Navy, and he absolutely fulfils one's idea of what an honourable, chivalrous Englishman should be."

"Handsome?" went on the soft voice suggestively.

"No; but with the truest, steadiest look in his eyes ever seen in man or woman."

"And the friendship is *quite* Platonic?" and the beautiful eyes met mine, mischief lurking in their depths.

I blushed slightly, but repeated, "Yes," with assurance. "You will be convinced I'm speaking the truth," I added, "when I tell you that I shall forthwith despatch a letter to Stephen, saying how delighted I shall be to see him and his friend, and will engage rooms for them on the spot."

"Oh!" said Hope. "That *is* conclusive;" and she once more relapsed into her former dreamy state of *dolce far niente*.

My cousin, Hope Hallam, had come to live with us three months previously, on the death of her father—her last remaining parent. I had hailed the advent of my pretty cousin with delight. I was an only child, and had been educated alone at home, and it was a never failing source of pleasure to me to have Hope sharing in my occupations and amusements. Though five years my junior, she being barely eighteen, we got on capitally together, she supplying the brightness my life had somewhat lacked, and I acting as a gentle antidote to her occasionally over-exuberant spirits.

We were now spending a couple of months in Switzerland, my parents making it a time of rest and recuperation; Hope and I, on the contrary, exerting ourselves from morning till night in the pure fresh air, and daily getting rosier and more and more capable of long excursions.

Hope made a charming picture as she lay back in the rocking-chair, with the sun, now ready to sink behind the rocky, snow-capped mountains, lighting up her many-tinted golden hair and delicate complexion with even added beauty. Her graceful figure was set off to perfection by a plain black dress with soft ruffles. A sigh escaped me; I was not pretty. There was nothing much to be said about me one way or the other. I was just an ordinary fair-haired, clear-complexioned English girl. Privately I entertained a great partiality for my ears and mouth, but was, nevertheless, well aware that between me and the word "beauty" no connection existed. I thought of Stephen, who, like all naval men, was extremely susceptible to female beauty, and wondered whether my lovely cousin might not win him from his long allegiance to me. I was not in love with Stephen, but had been first with him so long that I grudged giving him up to anyone else—a dog-in-the-mangerish kind of feeling which struck me with sudden shame and compunction. As if to make amends for even this passing sensation of envy, I stooped and kissed Hope as I passed on my way indoors to write my letter.

"Stephen's letter has made us very sweet!" she murmured. "I devoutly hope that Stephen himself will——"

This was too bad! I seized a large woollen shawl and regardless of delicate ruffles and dainty coiffure, smothered the dreamer in it.

"Tomboy! Hoyden! *Quite* capable of *shying* racquets;" etc., were the stifled exclamations I heard as I escaped from the wrath to come.

Three days later Hope and I dressed early for the evening *table d'hôte*, to be ready to greet our friends, who were to arrive in time for that meal. All the afternoon I had been longing to tramp down the valley and meet Stephen, but something held me back. It was three years since I had seen him, during which time he had been absent on a foreign station, and I knew, say what I would, that in the course of nature things could not always continue on the same easy happy lines they had when we were younger.

At last our travellers hove in sight, and I stood ready to welcome them at the top of the steps leading to the balcony. For a second I met Stephen's eyes with a look of glad welcome; the next I shrank back, as his gaze wandered from me and rested on Hope with intense admiration. And no wonder, I thought, with a sore heart. How could any man keep his eyes under control with that lovely vision, draped in soft white *crêpe*, rising before him.

Hardly had I noted the look than Stephen sprang up the steps and seized my hand, but his manner seemed to me already changed, chilled, and constrained. The old well-remembered chivalrous courtesy was there, but where was the equally well-remembered friendly boyish warmth? It was gone! A pang shot through me, and I answered his questions with cold self-possession. He looked hurt, but gave no other sign of having noticed the change. How painfully different it all was to the meeting I had been so happily looking forward to for months! Introductions took place, and presently I found myself mechanically questioning Mr. Gwynne on their journey. His answers fell on deaf ears; I was absorbed in the other two, who were already chatting like old acquaintances, and from the many admiring glances cast by Mr. Gwynne in their direction, I gathered that he, too, would gladly have found himself in Stephen's shoes just then.

The young men disappeared to change their rough walking suits for more civilised garments, and Hope seized my arm.

"You're right," she said, looking like a malicious sprite: "Stephen *is* delicious!"

To me that evening seemed interminable. We sat on a bench outside the hotel, and Stephen and I tried to keep up a conversation. He hoped I was well, and I hoped he was the same. He hoped I was enjoying myself, and I hoped he had had a pleasant time in Australia. Nothing could have been more correct and proper, but oh! how I longed to burst through the shackles that held me, and to say, "Stephen, dear boy, now just tell me everything you've heard, done, and said since last we met."

I think I might have given utterance to some such words if every now and again Hope hadn't created a diversion, by addressing some merry remarks to us, in the midst of her lively talk with Mr. Gwynne—remarks which Stephen responded to with warmth, almost, it seemed to me, with relief at the interruption, but which made me shrink still further into my shell, and my manner to become more and more chilly, till I dare say I seemed to the others to be partaking of the nature of the frozen peaks around.

At last it was time to retire, and with a sigh of relief I bade everyone good-night. Hope insisted on coming to my room, in spite of all my attempts to get rid of her. Upon my showing vexation, she flung herself on her knees beside me, and looked up in my face with a charming expression of tender amusement and loving mischief.

"What a silly child it is!" she said. "Well, I'll go away if you'll kiss me really nicely, and say, 'Good-night, sweet coz,' as if you meant it."

"Good-night, sweet coz," I repeated, with a rush of love. Some might have resisted her sweet seductiveness—I could not.

She gave me a loving hug, and left the room smiling brightly.

I sat long by my window gazing at the mighty Matterhorn, as if that peaceful giant could impart to me some of its noble repose. What had disturbed me so? I was not in love with Stephen—of that I felt sure. Then why did the change in him affect me so? Why should it make me feel impatient even with my darling Hope? It was an unworthy, wicked feeling. I didn't want Stephen for myself, but couldn't bear anyone else to have him. I imagined I felt as a loving sister might when suddenly ousted from her place as sole confidante to a favourite brother. At last I fell asleep, inwardly vowing that no change on Stephen's part should make me behave otherwise than in the old friendly fashion.

Alas for good resolutions! They lasted till breakfast time next morning, when I found Hope and Stephen swearing eternal friendship over a pot of jam, which they had retained for their exclusive use. Mr. Gwynne sat opposite, laughingly egging them on to finish the pot. No one noticed my entrance, and it was not until I stood beside them that Stephen sprang up with a self-conscious manner, and bade me good-morning.

All their merriment seemed to vanish merely at my approach, and this knowledge was hardly calculated to induce a more cordial manner on my part, and brought back with redoubled force all the sore and envious feelings of the previous evening.

I passed the following ten days in alternating fits of misery and anger. Stephen shunned me more and more, and when he did address me from motives of politeness or duty, I always snubbed him. It was only too evident that it was Hope he cared for, and that it was only in her presence and when basking in her smiles that he threw off constraint and appeared more like his old self. I avoided Hope so persistently that at last she gave up trying to force my reserve. Luckily, her good spirits never failed, and she and Mr. Gwynne kept up a running stream of chaff and fun from morning till night; and to outsiders, no doubt, we seemed the merriest of little quartettes.

We daily took long walks together, during one of which an incident occurred which caused me and Stephen to drift still further apart. We had come to a waterfall we wished to cross. The only way open to

us was over a crazy-looking erection of planks, with an equally crazy-looking water-duct as rail on one side. The bridge was not more than eight inches wide, and a slip through giddiness meant a fall of some twenty feet into the torrent rushing over the rocks below. Stephen left us and ran on to the planks, and standing in the middle, jumped violently up and down to test their safety. Up to the present moment I had succeeded in persuading myself that I was not in love with Stephen, but now, as I saw him balanced on that swaying structure, with nothing between him and death save one narrow plank, my eyes were opened at a bound, and I knew I loved him—that he was all in all to me. All the more obstinately did I shut up my heart. I would die ere he should suspect the truth.

He soon returned, and called out: "It is quite safe; you look after Miss Hallam, Dermot, and I'll take charge of Molly."

This arrangement didn't suit me at all. I dared not trust my self-control alone with Stephen on the bridge, at the very moment when the overpowering conviction of my love for him had overwhelmed me.

I answered rudely, to conceal the emotion surging in me:

"Please, Mr. Gwynne, you take me, and leave Hope to Stephen. She'll be safe with him, and I prefer to trust myself to you."

Stephen went white, but uttered no word as he silently proffered his help to Hope, who accepted it with a gentle wistful smile which maddened me. As soon as we had crossed the bridge Stephen came to my side and asked, in a low tone of suppressed anger:

"Will you please explain your behaviour to me, Molly? What have I done that you, my old friend, should treat me with such utter contempt and want of consideration?"

I think I should have broken down had there been the slightest trace of gentleness in his voice, but there was none. I bit my lips, and called up my determination to enable me to answer in an indifferent tone:

"Pray don't flatter yourself that what you do or say has any power to influence either my feelings or behaviour."

He struggled to keep back a bitter retort, then, not trusting himself to speak again, strode on, and rejoined the others. I had indeed put the finishing stroke—our friendship was a thing of the past, and it was evident that Stephen, at least, would no more seek to renew it.

Two days later we were all busy preparing for a real snow climb. Hope and I had gained my mother's consent to our going with difficulty, but we were so urgent that she had been driven to give in, on the understanding that something easy and not too long was to be attempted. The Breithorn was chosen as the mountain fulfilling these conditions. We were to spend the previous night at the Riffelberg Hotel. I longed for the rough physical work of the climb as a help to ease, if only for a time, the constant misery gnawing at my heart; and Hope was eager to be able to say she had actually stood on the summit of a snow mountain. The young men had already made three ascents, and had been pronounced *Tüchtige Bergsteiger* by the guides, who were also to accompany us on the present occasion. We started from the hotel at two o'clock in the morning, by the light of thick candles fixed in upturned bottles.

I felt calmed and subdued, almost content, as we proceeded in the still darkness. Slowly the day dawned, and at last the sun burst forth in full splendour, lighting up everything far and near with marvellous tints. We reached the top of the mountain about half-past eight, but no promised panorama met our expectant eyes, for barely had the sun fully risen than clouds had begun to threaten in every direction.

The other three were as merry as larks, and left me alone, which was all I asked for. The hard work had warmed my blood and induced a somewhat healthier frame of mind, though many a time during the ascent had my heart been wrung by Stephen's unceasing attention and care of Hope, who proved a less capable climber than I. Mr. Gwynne, too, had appeared full of anxiety on her behalf, and had left me to indulge in long reveries undisturbed. When we reached the summit the guides looked anxiously at one another, and barely allowed us time to refresh ourselves ere they hurriedly began the descent,

"Es kommt schnee" (snow is coming), they said; and indeed the ominous clouds were rapidly coming closer and closer.

Half-an-hour later we were enveloped in a blinding snowstorm. Hope stumbled terribly, and Stephen, who was roped behind her, never let go of her for an instant. He just glanced at me, but seeing I was proceeding steadily, paid no further heed to me. Not for worlds would I have confessed that my limbs were really trembling, and that I was nearly perished with cold. No; I believe had I been walking to my death, I should have marched firmly on till I dropped. In my obstinate pride I also refused all offers of help from Mr. Gwynne, who was behind me. One guide led, the other brought up the rear.

What I went through no words of mine can describe. The sight before me of Stephen closely holding Hope, stabbed me again and again, while my bodily sufferings almost overcame me. More than once the thought drowsily entered my brain that it would be preferable to fling myself down the precipice yawning wide at my side than continue longer in this state of dull misery and frozen pain.

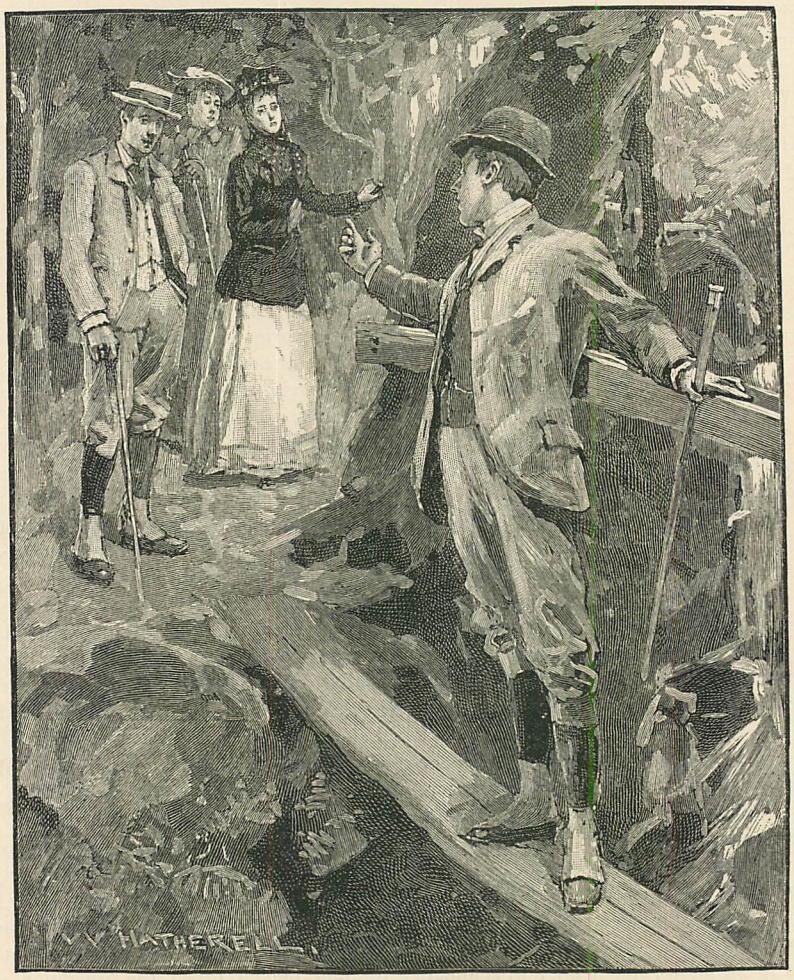
Slowly we advanced, till the Théodule Glacier was reached, and here our guides made Stephen let go of Hope and let her walk alone, for fear of crevasses, only telling him to hold the rope surely in his hand, in case of accidents. For a short while all went well, Hope following in the guide's footsteps as he bid her. Then she began to stagger blindly. Suddenly she fell to one side, and nearly disappeared down a crevasse. The rope brought her up sharply, and she was instantly drawn out by Stephen and the guide, whilst Mr. Gwynne was in a perfect fever to get at her. She could no longer walk, so Stephen lifted her in his strong arms, and we proceeded more slowly than ever. On reaching the hut, which was luckily close at hand, Stephen and Mr. Gwynne quickly laid Hope in

front of a blazing fire, and busied themselves with restoring her animation. Warmth, rubbing, and cordials soon brought her to, and she looked up at her two helpers with a bright smile. They were too occupied to trouble about me, and I suffered intensely from cold and numbness. Presently they needed my help, and Stephen turned to me. "Molly," he said, "I know you understand bandaging. Come and tie up Miss Hope's foot—it is hurt."

Had he no pity? Could he not see I was powerless to move one frozen finger, let alone perform a delicate operation like bandaging? Surely, if he had cared to look he must have seen that I was shivering from head to foot, and that no warmth reached me from the fire, for Hope was stretched in front of it; and oh, the soreness of my heart! Still, my pride would not allow me to give in and confess the truth *to him*. What did *he* care what I suffered? What did it matter to him whether I were ill or whether I were well?

I answered in a tone so hard that I started; could that, indeed, be my voice speaking?—"I should not dream of interfering with your patient. I should be neither as skilful nor as tender a nurse as you. I will leave her in your hands."

I didn't wait to encounter the surprised looks of the young men. Unable to bear the scene any longer, I rushed outside and fled down the mountain—down, and down, and down—I cared not where, so long as I was out of sight of those in the hut.



"'IT IS QUITE SAFE'" (*p.* 691).

By the time I had reached the Riffelberg there were no more signs of snow, and my blood was tingling in my veins with such exquisite pain, I could have screamed aloud. I had sufficient sense left to enter the hotel, and order a *chaise à porteurs* to start for the Théodule hut without delay, to bring down a lady who had met with an accident. The landlord, a kind, courteous man, at once gave the necessary orders; then looking curiously at me, asked whether he could be of service to me. Perhaps he wondered whether I was sane. My hair was wet and lank, my clothes

soaked and stained; and if my face portrayed my feelings, its expression must have been wild indeed.

I refused all offers of help, and sped on my way downwards. I must have met many people before reaching Zermatt, but have no recollection of the fact; my one idea was to reach my mother and home.

There she was, my dear mother, anxiously looking out for us, for the snowstorm on the mountains had been reported below. I rushed past her, flew upstairs, and at last reached the shelter of my room. My mother found me lying prostrate on the bed, still and silent, save for an occasional tearless, shivering sob, which shook me from head to foot. She wasted no time in words, but as soon as she knew the others were safe, she called in the help of a chambermaid, and between them I was undressed, given a hot bath, and well rubbed between blankets. Hot drinks were next administered, and soon—thank Heaven! very soon—I fell fast asleep, utterly worn out, physically and mentally.

All that night my mother never left me; even in my sleep I felt her loving presence. The next morning I woke all right, save for a little languor and stiffness; my sturdy frame had resisted all ill effects from the trials on the preceding day. Still my mother judged it more prudent for me to take it easy in my room for a day or two, and I was well content with the arrangement. I had no wish to meet the others sooner than was necessary.

I was told that Stephen had arrived breathless at the hotel a quarter of an hour after me. He declared I must have flown down the mountain, for he had quickly discovered my absence and come after me. Hope had been carried as far as the Riffelberg by the guides, where they had met the *chaise à porteurs*, and after a three hours' rest and warming in the hotel, she had been comfortably carried down. Mr. Gwynne had remained with her, and both had arrived in excellent spirits. Her foot was now doing well, and she could hobble about a little when tightly bandaged up.

This last news relieved my mind of a terrible weight, but waves of crimson flooded my face as I remembered my answer in the hut when applied to for help.

The following afternoon I heard merry voices below my window, and, looking out, saw Hope, Stephen, and Mr. Gwynne having tea in the garden. I dared not wait till the sight should arouse the same demon of jealousy which had already mastered me once before; so putting on my hat, I slipped out of the hotel, and made my way up the hills at the back. And there, lying in the still solitude, surrounded by majestic peaks, which seemed to look down upon my paltry passion with eyes of wonder and disdain, I insensibly became calmer. By degrees peace entered my storm-driven heart, and I was lulled to sleep.

When I awoke, I found myself carefully wrapped up in a warm shawl, but I had taken no shawl with me. Drowsily I sat up and looked around, when a figure arose from the bank behind and came to my side. It was Stephen. The peace so hardly won fled at his approach.

"Molly," he asked, "why have you slipped away alone like this? Why do you avoid us all?"

My heart beat wildly, and I found no answer.

Stephen came closer, and laid down beside me.

"Molly," he repeated, "tell me what has come between us? I must know what I have done to forfeit your friendship. Don't answer me, dear, like you did once before—I couldn't bear it."

Surely I did not deserve such gentleness. I hung my head like a child, and answered almost inaudibly:

"I find, Stephen, that now we're older the old boy and girl friendship is no longer possible. You, too, are changed."

"Yes, I *am* changed," burst in Stephen; "and I also find such friendship is impossible; but why? it is not because I have learnt to hate you, Molly! It is impossible, because that friendship has given place to a deep and tender love. I came—I came from England to ask you to be my wife, Molly. You met me with a dislike you never even attempted to conceal, and which has continued ever since. Tell me what has changed you so?"

For a minute the joy of knowing Stephen loved me blotted out all other thoughts; but he was holding my hand, and would not be denied his answer.

"Tell me," he whispered again.

"I thought——" I began feebly, but broke down in the middle. "Don't you know! oh, Stephen! don't you know?" I cried.

Yes; love made him quick to understand. Almost before I could grasp what had happened, I found myself whispering a long confession, sheltered by his loving arms. He listened so patiently as I talked on. "Poor child, poor child!" he murmured, when he heard how I had suffered in the hut.

"I had no idea you were such a born actress, Molly," he said at last; "but in the future you must promise me two things, dear heart—that you'll never act before me again, and never again allow jealousy to find an entrance in your heart."

Our walk back was very silent. I had found the peace I had come out to seek, and my happiness was too deep for words.

Close to the hotel we came upon Hope and Mr. Gwynne, perched on the trunk of a fallen tree. No sooner did Hope catch sight of us than a look of understanding and delight flashed into her eyes.

"So, Miss Molly!" she cried in triumph, "you've come down from your stilts at last. Perhaps you'll now kindly explain your extraordinary behaviour during the last ten days?"

I flushed hotly. "I have already given an account of my misdeeds, and been forgiven," I said.

Hope kissed me with loving warmth, but managed, meanwhile, to whisper: "Just you wait till I get you alone, and then *beware!*"

"Hope," cried Mr. Gwynne, "please to interpret this scene for me. Ought I to be wildly congratulating everybody?"

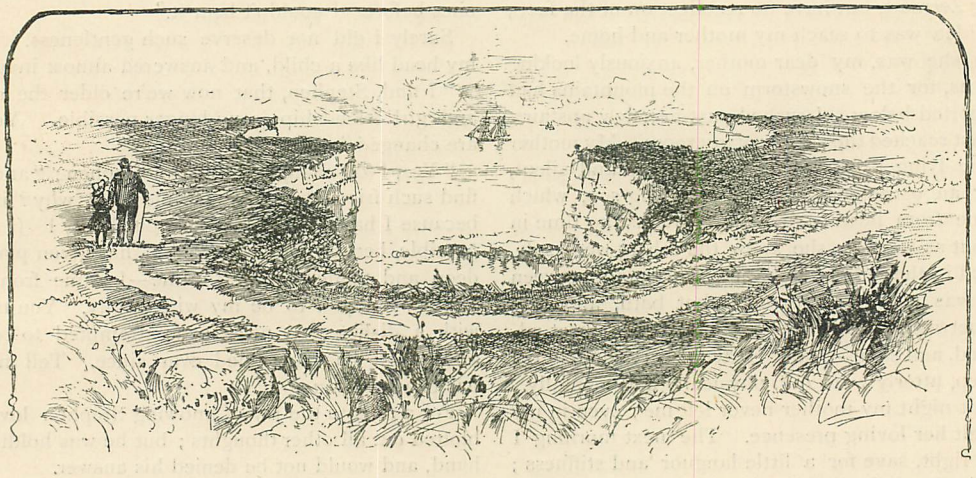
"Of course you ought, Dermot. Surely you can see that for yourself."

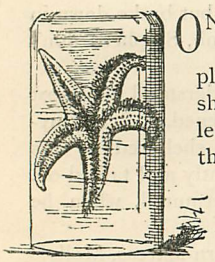
"*Hope! Dermot!*" I exclaimed; and now it was Hope's turn to blush.

"Well, you didn't suppose I intended to be left out in the cold, did you?" she asked defiantly.

J. Evelyn.

WHAT I FOUND IN A ROCK POOL.





STAR-FISH IN JAR.

ON the southern coast, about half an hour's walk from a quiet watering place, is a "gap" leading to the shore. At low tide, from the firm level sand there stretches down to the water's edge and out into the sea a ledge of rocks, overgrown with bladderwrack and hollowed by the action of the waves into numberless holes, which the tide long ago converted into pools, filled with a population strange to us who dwell inland. And many, even of those who live hard by, have notions about minute marine life as crude as those entertained about land animals by the famous railway guard who classed Frank Buckland's monkey as a "dog," and his tortoises as "hinsects."

There are marvellous things to be found in rock pools. The merest tiro who will watch by one for an hour or two, will find a new world opening to him; and, if he wishes to secure some of these unfamiliar forms of life, a few wide-mouthed bottles will serve his purpose, and a pocket lens, costing some three or four shillings, will show him details enough to enable him to identify them.

With an equipment scarcely more elaborate than this—the only additional implements being a pair of small forceps and a bone letter opener—the following forms, among others, were recently found in, and some of them taken from, a pool about half-way between tide-marks on the ledge in question.

The pool was about three feet long by a foot wide; the sides sloped gently inwards, and the floor was covered by nearly a foot of water. To get a full view it was necessary to turn back the coarse bladderwrack which grew abundantly all round. The edges of the pool were fringed with the bright glossy green fronds of the sea lettuce, intermixed with the long slender tubes of grass-like alga, some of the larger kinds of which have been compared to sausage skins inflated and coloured green. In the mimic coves and bays into which the tidal water had cut the sides, grew some of the commoner red and green seaweeds. But the only plants calling for special mention are the peacock's tail and the common coralline. The first is rare on our southern coasts, but common enough in tropical seas. At first, one does not perceive the reason for the popular name, but as the light falls on the filaments that fringe the fronds and the concentric lines with which they are marked, and is broken up into prismatic colours, one is bound to admit that the name is well chosen, for each frond glows with brilliant metallic hues that the outspread train of the peacock may rival, but cannot excel. The coralline is noteworthy as having been till within the last fifty years classed as an animal. It springs from a broad chalky base, of a purplish colour, which is that also of the living plant, which turns white in death. The frond—popularly called the stem—is jointed, and if examined with a hand lens after the encrusting lime has been removed, its vegetable nature will be apparent. This was demonstrated by Johnston, about 1842: he kept it for eight weeks in a jar of sea water, which did not become putrescent. Had it been an animal it would soon have exhausted all the oxygen in the water, and its own death must have followed.

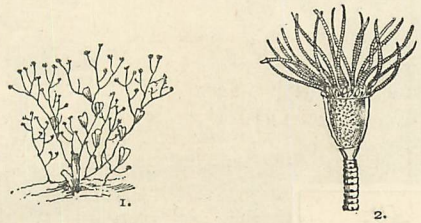
Rising from the base of the coralline is a small elevation of nearly the same colour. Closer inspection shows that this is an animal—its name is Chiton; it is of very ancient family, dating back to Silurian times, and had direct ancestors in the swampy pools in the forests of ferns and lycopods and conifers long since converted into coal. It is a strange creature, less than an inch long, somewhat like a limpet without shell, covered with eight bands of closely-fitting mail, and creeping slug-like by a muscular foot. It will not live for any time in an aquarium; so we will leave it to crawl over the rocks in peace.

There are several of the common sea anemones waiting with outstretched tentacles for any worm, or crab, or tinier crustacean that fortune may throw in their way, for all is fish that comes to their net. They will even put up with vegetable diet for a while, and though in times of plenty they are greedy feeders, when needs must they can fast as well as a boa-constrictor.

Right in the corner, shaded by a miniature forest of weed, is the thick-horned anemone, who has just captured a dog-crab. This fellow is worth taking to London, so we will try to dislodge him. Now the bone letter opener comes into play. Anemones, as is well known, adhere by their base, and if this is injured, death generally follows pretty quickly. Some people try to remove them by force; but a letter opener, or some such implement, slipped under the base, will raise the animal sufficiently to allow the fingers to be passed between it and the rock, and thus it may be generally pulled off uninjured. It seemed as if this fellow was all right when he was dropped into a jar and covered with wet weed; but he died—perhaps from overfeeding, perhaps from the effects of the journey—before he could be sent to the tanks in the fish house at the Zoological Gardens.

On the bottom of the pool lies the shell of a periwinkle, with the top broken off. Not a very remarkable object, but it moves about in such strange fashion, that we will examine it more closely. Picking it up carefully, and laying it on the side of the pool, we discover the cause of the erratic motion. The rightful owner no longer occupies his home, which is now tenanted by a hermit crab, common enough round our coasts, and chiefly remarkable as forming a connecting link between the true crabs and the lobsters. Often enough he carries an anemone on his shell. Ours, however, bears no such burden: he is companionless.

There are many other shells in the pool. Here is a young whelk, which has been washed up by the tide, and is crawling about contentedly, as if dredgers and shell-fish gatherers had no existence. Here, too, are the dog whelk, with its strange foot, carrying two diverging horns in front and two little tails behind; and the limpet, with his conical shell covered with acorn barnacles, casting out their slender arms, like sweep-nets, with untiring industry in search of prey. The holes in the sides of the pool are made by the piddock, and these cylindrical cells are hollowed out

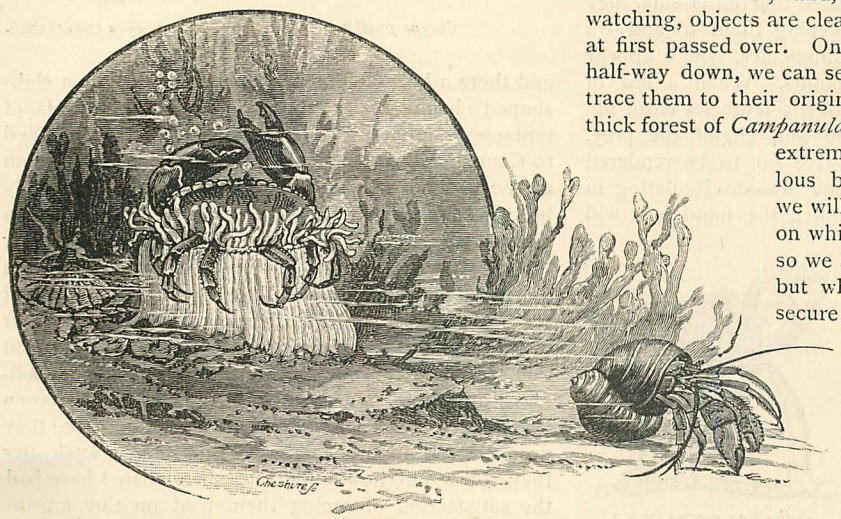


1. *Campanularia flexuosa.*
2. HEAD OF *Campanularia*, ENLARGED.

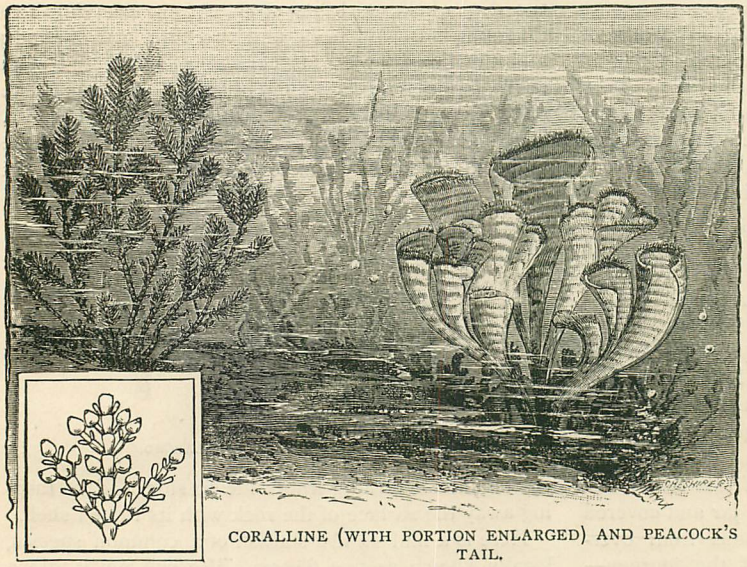
by the animal turning from side to side, and so rasping away the surface of the rock with its ridged shell.

Here is a find—a live starfish of a common species, locally known as five fingers. We will put it into a jar of sea water, and we shall see the marvellous apparatus by which it will climb up the sides. As it lies reversed on what is properly its upper surface, with the extremities of the arms slightly bent, it protrudes from the surfaces of these organs a number of tiny tubes, each armed at the end with a sucker. These are the "feet"; they are also used as feelers. Extending one of the arms till it touches the opposite side of the glass, it fixes itself by means of the protruded feet and draws itself slightly upwards. Then more feet are put forth, and a firmer grip is taken of the side of the jar. The arm next on each side is extended in like fashion, and their feet also take hold of the glass, and so the animal raises itself upwards by degrees, till it has recovered from its uncomfortable position, and the whole of the lower side is affixed to the side.

The longer one looks into a rock pool the more one is able to see. One's eyes become accustomed to the novel conditions; and, after intense and patient watching, objects are clearly distinguished which were at first passed over. On a crag-like projection, about half-way down, we can see some shadows, and, as we trace them to their origin, we find they are cast by a thick forest of *Campanularia flexuosa*, a tiny zoophyte, extremely common, but of marvellous beauty. With a stout knife we will hack off a piece of the rock on which the forest grows. In doing so we shall render the water turbid, but when it clears again we will secure the fragment with our forceps, and drop it gently into a tube full of sea water. As we examine our prize with the hand lens, we can understand why the old naturalists called these creatures zoophytes, and treated them as connecting



CRAB CAPTURED BY ANEMONE.



CORALLINE (WITH PORTION ENLARGED) AND PEACOCK'S TAIL.

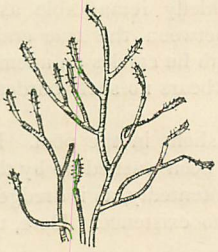
links between animals and plants. The bit of rock is covered with tiny stems, connected at their bases by a kind of creeping root-stock. Each stem is slightly bent in a series of gentle curves, and sends off branches, quite in tree-like fashion, and these, as they wave to and fro with the motion of the water, add to the illusion. All the branches are tipped with delicate crystal cups, called the calycles, in each of which resides one of the individuals which make up the colony, and which are technically called *polypites*. Their structure is very simple—a soft, contractile body, containing the digestive sac, and furnished with a proboscis having at the top an opening that serves as a mouth and fringed with a row of tentacles admirably adapted for taking food. The sole office of the polypites is to bring nourishment to the tiny commonwealth.

If we hold the bottle steadily up to the light for a few minutes, we shall see some of the polypites extend their tentacles cautiously above the rim of the bell-like cups, and then, as if satisfied that all is safe, they will expand them fully, sweeping them to and fro in the water in search of animalcules, which appear to us like minute bright points. When a few of these are brought within reach the tentacles close up, the lips of the proboscis rise and engulf the prey, which is taken into the digestive sac to be rendered fit to join the nutrient current always circulating in the common canal. This much the hand lens will show us: for details we need the microscope. The colony is likely to live for some time in an aquarium, so we will carefully put away the tube and continue our search.

Pedicellina cernua (MUCH ENLARGED).

The sides of the pool, after careful search, will apparently yield us nothing more, but at the bottom lies a darkish piece of weed that may repay examination. We will pick it up with the forceps and look it over with the hand lens. It has evidently been washed up from the laminarian zone, where the tangle and oar weed spread gigantic fronds, and is a precious find, for it is covered with animal life, two forms of which we will look at. As we glance along one of the sprays we see a number of tiny objects, some of which are lying prone, some are erect, others springing up with a sweeping motion, and others again falling with a sweep from the erect to the prone position. There is little spontaneity of movement, they seem actuated by clockwork, and the sight is strangely comic. Our lens shows us that each individual consists of a cup-like body mounted on a flexible stalk, the stalks being bound together as in Campanularia, which it resembles somewhat in its method of feeding, though the tentacles scarcely rise above the rim of the cup, and each individual appropriates the prey it captures, there being no common nutrient canal. The scientific name of these animals is *Pedicellina cernua*; but we may translate the second or specific name, and call them "Mountebanks."

Creeping along another spray, and sending up here



Coryne pusilla.

HEAD OF *Coryne* (ENLARGED).

and there a horn-coloured tube surmounted by a club-shaped head—really the polypite—with whorls of tentacles knobbed at the tip, is *Coryne pusilla*, allied to Campanularia, but belonging to a different division of the order. This lowly little creature is extremely beautiful, the dark flesh colour of the central mass contrasting strongly with the dead white of the outer layer. Coryne does well in the aquarium, and, as a matter of fact, this identical colony is, at the time of writing, living in one of my tanks. For a week after it was gathered it was kept in a ten-ounce bottle, and then brought to London, and transferred to a bell-glass aquarium. There were then about a dozen polypites in the colony; and as food was scarce they drooped, and apparently died. But about a week after they threw out new buds, and since then I have had the satisfaction of seeing them feed on tiny crustaceans.

HENRY SCHERREN.

CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.—WHAT TO WEAR IN OCTOBER.

FROM OUR PARIS AND LONDON CORRESPONDENTS.

I.—FROM OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.

OCTOBER is come, a lovely month in France, but one when we find more to interest us outside Paris than within its pleasant boundaries.

You see by the vignette that French fashionable dames are once more thinking of tartans. The favourite specimens have enough black in the design to give a *raison d'être* for the universal use of jet trimmings.

We have never taken here to long gowns for daily wear, and the skirts only just touch the ground; but the back breadths are cut on the cross, the front on the straight, and are frequently entirely guiltless of trimming. There is a decided tendency to adopt bright colouring; indeed, I am often tempted to wonder where this predilection is likely to end. The model from which the initial sketch is made is a fancy plaid, composed of broad red stripes and narrower black ones, on which a line check of bright yellow is thrown. The sleeves, like the skirt, are formed of this, and cut in the leg-of-mutton style, but the bodice describes a Spanish jacket in the front, over a yellow shirt, the fulness of which is confined by a pointed waist-belt of jetted passementerie. The tints have been chosen with rare French taste, but even under those favourable auspices the collar band of plain red silk united to the yellow shirt points to a daring combination of colours such as mulattos and dwellers in warmer climates have hitherto alone affected.

I have more, however, to tell with regard to plaids. Manufacturers have turned their attention greatly thereto, and have brought out an entirely new fabric, which has such familiar tartans for the groundwork as the Gordon, Forbes, Macleod, Sutherland, Murray, Leslie, 79th Cameronians, and Stuart. At first sight it would appear that the soft woollen stuff is knitted, but the appearance is brought about by an interwoven cord, matching the groundwork in colour, introduced on the surface at a distance of a quarter of an inch apart. This rejoices in the name of "tartan plissé."

But we cannot dismiss plaids from our minds only with this novelty, for Fashion has not been content with adopting the tartans of the ancient Scotch chieftains, but has developed much invention with regard to fancy plaids. The Scotch element is to the fore. The French always have had a predilection for fair Scotia; and Montrose tweeds, Pitlochry cloth coarsely woven with knickerbocker effects, Balmoral tweeds, Shetlands, the speckled Bannockburns, the coarse, canvas-like Craigelloch, and the marbled surface of Glen Carron, nearly all have vivid flecks of colour thrown carelessly on the neutral ground intermixed with bold plaids.

Russiaphobia still holds its own, and the Russian jacket and the Russian colours have much to recommend them. We have to thank the jacket from the land of the Czars for the reintroduction of deep basques, which, fortunately, threaten to supersede the plain make of skirt about the hips that has proved unbecoming to many figures. Waistcoats will be worn throughout the winter, and I have chosen the accompanying sketch of an autumn gown because it suggests many leading innovations in the modes, and, moreover, I hope will be useful to those who are having dresses renovated.

Stripes are decidedly in vogue, and are frequently

"I'M GOING TO BUY THE TICKETS."

combined with plain colours. If you have a striped gown by you with a short basque, proceed to cut the edge of the skirt in vandykes over a band of plain cloth, and add a distinct, deep, all-round basque to the skirt band, over which the bodice is to be worn. The plain material at the hem is further carried out in the waistcoat, revers, and cuffs.

Plain cloths of two materials are still most fashionable, and should you be tired of the plain skirts, which, pardon me for saying, you have done to death in England, introduce the narrow front as in the accompanying figure, and let it be of a lighter tone than the rest, and be carried up the bodice. The model is trimmed with silk rouleaux—an old style revived from our grandmothers. They are made of silk cut on the cross and sewn over wadding, only a modicum—not too much. These in a triple row border the hem and sides of the skirt, and of the cascade arranged on the bodice. The lighter colour is trimmed with rouleaux of a still lighter shade introduced on the straight neck band and on the yoke and sleeves.

Colours must necessarily be much considered. I do not find so much that is actually novel, but the combinations are quite unique in many instances. It would seem that we have taken the artist's palette for inspiration, and blended all with a careless hand; yet there is much method in our madness. The groundworks are in nearly every case of neutral tones—grey, black, and brown. Mahogany is united with grey, nut-brown with crevette and grass-green, and the blues that are nearly blue and the blues that are mostly green are shown to advantage with fawn and reseda. Lightning flashes of colour are shot through the fabrics, basket-work checks are developed by the speckles which are suggested on their surface. Flashes and stripes commingle. Pink and black and blue and black are used for many of the newest dresses.

There are diagonal lines woven in two colours, speckled grounds with brilliant knickerbocker stripes coarse and loose. Yellow asserts its power by sparse stripes on dark grounds, here and there silk hair lines of lighter shades enliven many sombre stuffs, and tiny coloured motifs are brocaded in silk on black.

Some of the leading houses are making up a new and stylish woollen with a dark heliotrope ground, scattered over with lozenges of many tones, in plain weaving on a coarse kind of canvas-like surface. The infinite variety of the tints leaves much to the ingenuity of the dressmaker. Corduroy is worn, and so are shot chameleon stuffs.

Woollen muslin with checks and pretty bunches of flowers are used for loose, lounging gowns and tea-gowns, and these have frequently the threads drawn so that the silk linings are visible in the checks thus formed.

For the moment double capes and long jackets are the outdoor garments accepted, but next month I shall be better able to tell you of the style the best dressed women have adopted. We are content now with light wraps thrown on as required and not continuously worn.

II.—FROM OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENT.

I HAVE just been spending a couple of hours trying to reduce to something like a theory the curious collection of hats and bonnets which we are sure to wear, and which I hope will look less fantastic when they are trimmed. Felt hats are made with enormously wide brims and only an apology for a crown apparently springing up like a circular Esquimaux tent on the wide expanse of brim. Flop hats are becoming and, moreover, are sure to please, for their colourings are lovely. The choice, as far as shape goes, lies between the Gainsborough and the Capeline, made with light blue, pink, nut brown, and red brims.

Some have silk beaver brims, and in white, trimmed with beaver fur, they are most charming, and show off pretty, young, piquant faces to the best advantage. I must not, however, dismiss the subject of crowns too cursorily, for their name is legion. Some are square, have a blocked rounded ledge, curious to see and occasionally two semi-spheres seem to rest one on the other. These will look different when they are trimmed with the new ribbons which are to be mostly used. The lighter felts are adorned with an applique of lighter or darker flowers on the brims, the crowns fluted to a central button, like the German student caps, of picturesque aspect. Some of the brims stand up at the side, like wings.

Grizzly felt hats appeal to the economical, for they bear rough wear better than any other kind, but even these suffer from the comical fever which would seem to have beset the caterers of Fashion when they planned the new shapes. Jam-pot crowns have asserted their potency even here, and look more curious than with the broad brims.

For sea travelling, Scotland, and many other occasions, when the force of the wind has to be considered, the old cricketing cap with stiff flap has been resuscitated for ladies' wear; it is made in corduroy and puffed in the front, thereby effectually distinguishing it from masculine headgear. In France the brims of flop hats are frequently pointed over the face. In England we keep faithful to the sailor hat, but avoid a make which many fashionable milliners recommend, and which is composed of a double straw plait, which renders it so heavy and so unpliable that it is singularly uncomfortable.

Young folks will admire the boat-shaped hats, with Mother Shipton pointed crowns, which are always becoming. Hats are so universally worn that we are apt to neglect the subject of bonnets, but coarse straws, in uncommon colours, are to be worn; and the jam-pot and peg-top crowns will be some of the curious features which our modern-day enthusiasts have accepted with avidity and questionable taste; the brims which accompany them turn downwards, like the old Paysanne shape.

The Marie Stuart point is introduced into bonnets and also hats, but then it mostly accompanies the pleated Beefeater crown. Wired lace will be used as trimming and many of the leaves of the tobacco plant,

A COIGN OF VANTAGE.

which goes by the name of "palm," but is so treated that it is alike useful and durable.

If you have by you any wide chiné ribbon, such as was worn some years since, you will find that you can turn it to great advantage. I was shown some delightful dresses, made by a first-rate firm, in which it had been used for sleeves, converting a simple fawn crepon into a most stylish evening gown. Sleeves nowadays are rarely of the same material as the dress, and any black gown for day or evening wear may be furbished up with coloured velvet, silk or satin sleeves, a little of the same colour appearing on the front. Bodices in their entirety may be also of a different fabric and colour from the skirt, so that it is possible to ring a variety of changes with a few yards of stuff. You can start for a continental tour with two or three skirts and the same number of bodices, but by means of movable sleeves, gauntlets, and waistcoats, to say nothing of a chiffon bow or two, you may seem to have twice as many, and be appropriately dressed for all occasions. The small fashionable Zouave jackets also make a variety of costumes, which is often most desirable. Woollens are eagerly sought for when the weather is cold, but I advisedly say that tailor-made gowns do not now by any means have it all their own way, and that there is a greater demand than there has ever been for rich silks, which from their durable qualities last well.

Striped velvets, striped tweeds and striped silks are all being made up now, and moiré is used a great deal on woollens in the form of revers. Black satin, trimmed with white crêpe de Chine, is a strong contrast, but it is accepted by some of the best-dressed women of the day.

Pipings, in which the old-fashioned cotton cord is employed, have come in again. They edge not only the armholes and the waist, but the hem of the skirt.

Wise men, opposed to women having a finger in every pie, say that the sex would never do for soldiers—they would need such constant changes in the uniforms, and would never submit to being pensioned off on account of age. I am not prepared to combat the opinion on either point. Indeed, the constant variations and revivals in modes, both small and great, testify to the justice of the rebuke.

I do not think you need much explanation of the accompanying pictures, but remember that though the skirts are plain they need as careful fitting to each individual figure as the bodices. The Russian blouse is taken from a grey model; it is trimmed with yellow galon bearing a device in black. The Princess gown is made in a pink and green striped material; the waist-ribbon is green, and so is the band at the cuff. The frill at the neck needs careful adjustment, as also the fulness over the left side.

Those who desire to blend fashion and charity may purchase some of the handiwork of Irish ladies. Nothing is more used for trimming than Irish guipure. I have lately seen a piece of point d'Aiguille which took some Irish ladies four years to accomplish, but all the most intricate stitches had been introduced, and it was a creditable heirloom to hand down to coming generations.

Astrachan fur, and cloths woven to resemble it, will be much in request as the months go on. Watteau ribbons are to be introduced between the shoulders, and waists are to be encircled by belts in tinsel embroidery with metal clasps.

Corded silk is replacing satin for many bridal gowns, and coffee-tinted lace is preferred to others; at weddings just now the bridesmaids have, in lieu of white or cream (which for a while seemed the universal livery), appeared in the brightest tints, such as vieux rose and grass-green, blush-pink and sky-blue, dark red and navy-blue, and the more faithfully the style of the dresses is copied from antique models the more fashionable are they considered.

THE YEAR'S JEWELS.

BY M. C. GILLINGTON.

OPAL : OCTOBER.

Hope.

THE red-breast sings with a plaintive note,
The cattle are housed in stall, my dear,
The dead leaves float at the rim of the moat,
Under the moss-grown wall, my dear ;
But your eyes are happy with dreams of spring,
As you sit by the hearth to-night,
And your opal ring like a living thing
Flashes with fitful light !

The dainty blossoms are gone indeed
To their home in the darkness deep, my dear,
But the hopeful seed for the whole world's need
Is laid in the earth to sleep, my dear !

And you gaze deep, deep, in the heart of the glow,
On the flickering, dancing flame,
And your blushes show what your lips breathe low,
As you whisper the one loved name.

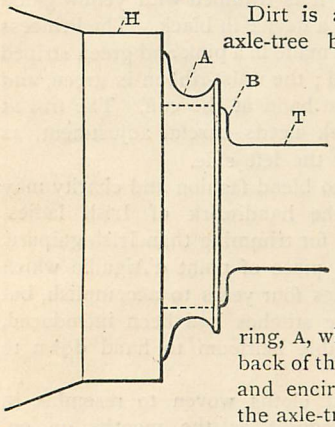
Though the dwindling day to the dark decline,
And the year be fain to depart, my dear,
Sweet visions shine like gems of the mine
In the hush of your faithful heart, my dear !
Watch yet awhile, and wait—who knows
What Fate may have stored for you ?
When winter goes, and the leaves unclose,
And beautiful dreams come true !

THE GATHERER:

AN ILLUSTRATED RECORD OF INVENTION, DISCOVERY, LITERATURE, AND SCIENCE.

Correspondents are requested, when applying to the Editor for the names and addresses of the persons from whom further particulars respecting the articles in the GATHERER may be obtained, to forward a stamped and addressed envelope for reply, and in the case of inventors submitting specimens for notice, to prepay the carriage. The Editor cannot in any case guarantee absolute certainty of information, nor can he pledge himself to notice every article or work submitted.

A Dust-proof Axle-tree.



Dirt is apt to get into the axle-tree bearings of vehicles and produce friction, with consequent heating of parts and, it may be, accidents. To keep the dust out, a Brighton coach-maker has introduced the device which we illustrate. It consists of a metal ring, A, which is secured to the back of the hub, H, of the wheel, and encircles the collar, B, of the axle-tree, T. The invention is a simple one, and the wonder is that it has not been brought out before now.

A Battery of Filters.

It may be remembered by our readers that MM. Pasteur and Chamberland brought out a filter for purifying water of organic matter, by forcing it under pressure through porcelain or other porous fabrics of the kind. Hitherto these filters have not been employed on a large scale, but now a battery of them has been installed at the Grand Hotel, Paris. The battery consists of six filters of the ordinary size. Each contains tubes of porcelain resembling hollow candles, into which the water passes from above. Forced through the pores of the ware it falls into a collector in the bottom of the filter. With a head of water from thirty to eighty feet the system works admirably, and the filters are readily cleaned by heating the "candle" tubes so as to burn up the organic matter in their pores.

A Home Savings Bank.

Private savings banks which open automatically when a pre-arranged amount has been collected in them are found to be useful ; and one of the latest is shown in our engravings. Fig. 1 gives an idea of the

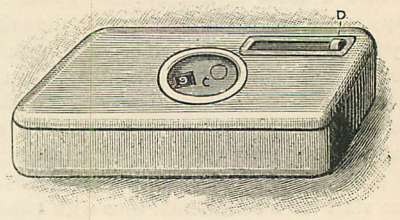
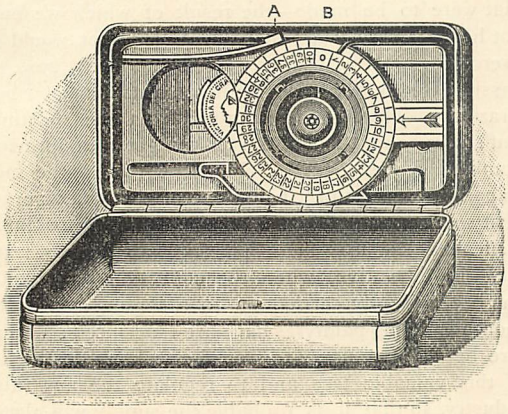


FIG. 1.

outside, and Fig. 2 the interior. Suppose that a person wishes the bank to open when he has put nine sixpences or the same number of half-sovereigns into it, the spring A (Fig. 2) is lifted, and the numbered disc, B, is turned to the right until the arrow points

to nine. The lid is then closed, and the coins are placed in the circle, C. When the pin, D, is pushed to the left, the coin is admitted into the box, and



A HOME SAVINGS BANK.—FIG. 2.

automatically registered. Every time a coin is received in this way, the number shown at C becomes less by one, thus informing the depositor how many more are required before the sum is complete, and the whole can be drawn. Such a contrivance, which only costs a few pence, is not only useful to children, but to adults who require to keep a watch on their expenditure.

The Cave-Dwellers of Mexico.

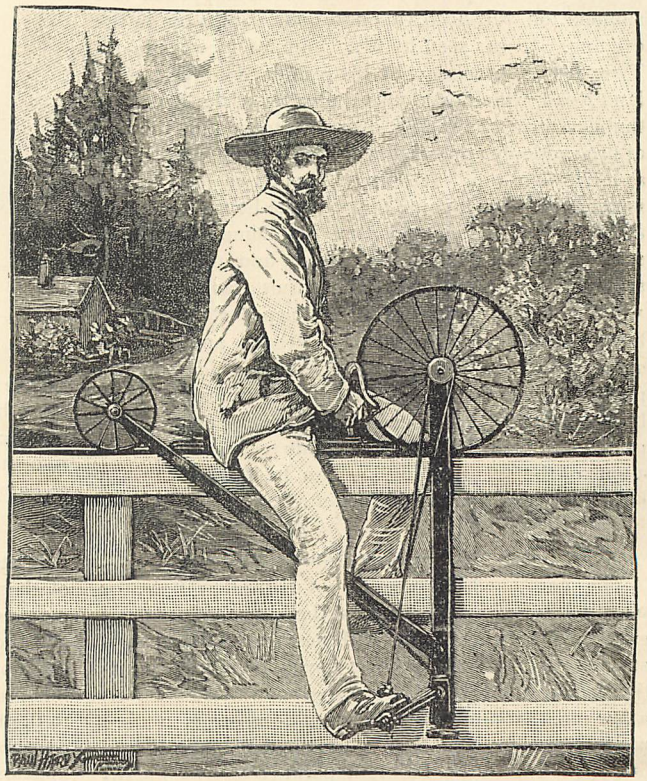
Mr. Carl Lumholtz, who has been exploring the old cave-dwellings of New Mexico, has now published an account of his researches, from which we gather that the most remarkable caves he visited are situated at the headwaters of the Piedras Verdes river, 6,850 feet above the sea-level. They open in the walls of a cañon from 100 to 200 feet above the river and some of them are 50 feet from floor to ceiling. They contain villages or groups of deserted houses built of ground porphyry, some of which are three storeys in height and provided with small windows, cruciform doors, and stone staircases. Large ollas, or jars, curiously decorated, and a great quantity of potsherds were found. On the shady side of the cañon the caves were reserved for sepulture, and the bodies in them had become mummified by the saltpetre of the rock. Photographs were taken of these and, in some instances, the hair, eyebrows, and features were nearly perfect. The hair is softer and wavier than that of the Red Indian, and the features resemble those of the existing Moqui and Zuni tribes, who have a tradition to the effect that they formerly came from the South. The Moqui Indians are so unlike the ordinary Indians of the North that the American trappers used to call them Welsh Indians, and believed them to be the descendants of the followers of Prince Madoc. It is certainly singular that the Moquis weave a striped blanket which is similar in the woof to the old Welsh blanket. They are not the only Indians, however, who have been taken for the descendants of the mythical Welsh discoverers of America. The same origin was claimed for the Mandans, among others, because they appeared to be of fairer skin than the generality of the Indians. The occurrence of albinos amongst the Moquis might help to account for the supposition.

Bees and their Wax.

According to Mr. A. T. Cook, of the Agricultural College, Michigan, bees require eleven pounds of honey in order to enable them to secrete one pound of wax. Other observers—for example, Huber, Viallon, and Hasty—have given both higher and lower estimates. Full particulars of the experiments of Mr. Cook will be found in the 26th Bulletin of the United States Department of Agriculture.

A Bicycle Railway.

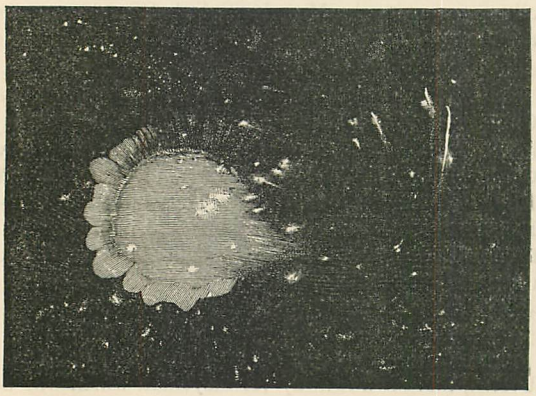
Between Mount Molly and Smithfield, New Jersey, U.S.A., there is a railway for bicyclists which will be understood from our illustration. The single rail is mounted on a fence, and the bicycle is inverted in the manner shown. Each passenger is his own locomotive, and thus combines exercise with travel. There is no danger of falling off and no trouble about steering, so that the passenger can freely look about him and enjoy the air. It is proposed to double the track for going and coming passengers, and to provide stations at intervals with supplies of vehicles.



A BICYCLE RAILWAY.

Curious Lightning.

The phenomenon of "ball lightning" is now admitted to be electrical, although Faraday and other great electricians have denied its electrical origin. Hundreds of well-attested instances have been observed



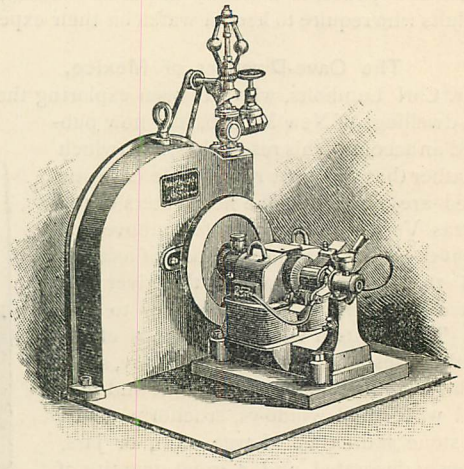
and chronicled of recent years in every part of the world. It usually appears during a thunderstorm, or when the atmosphere is highly charged with electricity, and the apparent size of the globe of light, which is never very brilliant, varies from an inch to several feet in diameter. Either it bursts with a loud explosion, which may prove destructive, or it silently vanishes in the air. Owing to its rarity there has hitherto been no photograph of the phenomenon; but our illustration is believed to represent a case which happened last summer, on July 17th, about a quarter-past ten in the evening. It was seen by Mr. Dunn, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, from the window of his residence in Westmoreland Road, which overlooks the valley of the Tyne. A thunderstorm was raging over the town and the ball of fire suddenly appeared over the river, moving as fast as a man can run. It seemed about two feet in diameter, and when it came opposite the house it stopped and vanished. About this time Mr. Dunn called to his son to expose a plate in his camera, and the cap was removed for an instant. The result was the picture which, by permission of Mr. Cowper Ranyard, we have engraved. The peculiar streaks and patches on the photograph are not, it is asserted, due to imperfect development, and similar luminosities have been observed on a lightning photograph before. The principal blotch of light is certainly very curious, and a part of the spherical outline can be traced within a kind of aura or nimbus on the left.

Bassine: A New Brush Fibre.

The continued high price of Brazilian bass, or piassaba, for brush-making, is the cause of frequent experiments being made with new materials as substitutes for true bass. A most successful new introduction has been Lagos bass, referred to in these columns a few months since; the newest, however, is a fibre which seems to have been christened "bassine," and is obtained from the Palmyra palm (*Borassus flabelli formis*) of India and Ceylon, from which island the fibre, already seen in the London market, comes. Its value is not more than half that of Lagos bass, as it is said to lack straightness, but from some experiments that were to be made—the result of which we have not heard—it was supposed that this defect would be overcome, and by proper dressing Palmyra bass, or bassine, would, for wear, be found equal to the best Brazilian. The fibre is obtained from the sheathing leaf stalks, and though the palms grow in immense numbers in India and Ceylon, it is one of the most valuable palms known, being one of the chief permanent sources of food to the people, as well as for timber for fences, the leaves for plaiting into baskets, trays, etc. In Elavativu, where the collection of this fibre has been recently carried on to a large extent, some thousand young palmyras have been sacrificed; it therefore became necessary to stop the reckless destruction of this valuable tree and to regulate the new fibre industry, so that it is probable the supply will always be limited.

A Water Dynamo.

The dynamo shown in our engraving is specially designed for household purposes, and is driven by water having a pressure of 10 lbs. to 60 lbs. per square



inch. The water motor and the dynamo are mounted on the same bedplate, and the motor can be utilised for other purposes than driving the dynamo, by disconnecting it. The power of the motor is about two indicated horse-power, and its efficiency is estimated at 80 per cent.

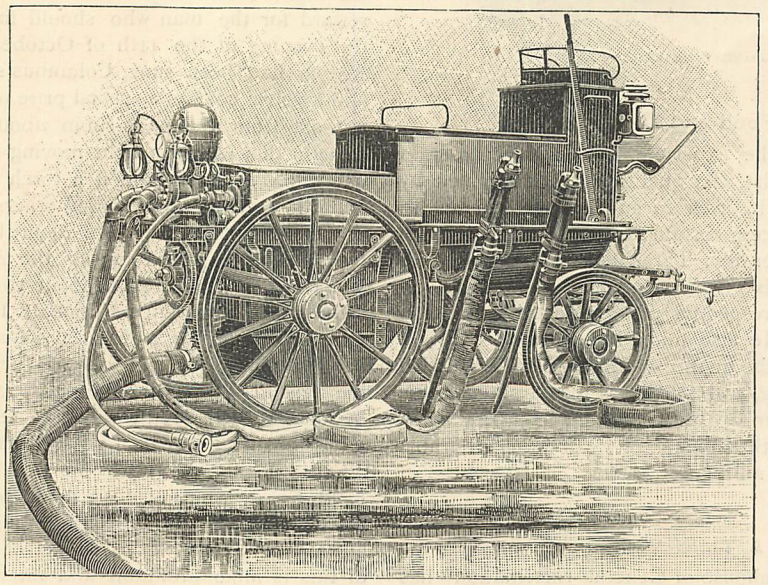
Strange Hallucinations.

A statistical inquiry into the nature and frequency of those hallucinations of the senses experienced by persons otherwise healthy and sane has been made, and the results were communicated to the recent Congress of Experimental Psychologists. It is doubtless this order of mental phenomena which has given rise to the belief in ghosts. The vision is, in fact, what we commonly understand by a ghost. It sometimes appears by night, sometimes in broad day; it is often surrounded with light, but occasionally it is to

all appearance solid and of a life-like character. Moreover, it happens now and then that more than one person sees it. Of course by seeing it we mean that the apparition is apparently outside the observer, and not visible merely in the mind's eye. It assumes to his eyes at least an objective existence, like that of a reality. Many stories of the kind are current in private families and have never been published ; but the particulars accurately described would be serviceable to the cause of psychology, and those who are acquainted with such instances may be recommended to communicate the facts to the Psychical or Psychological Society, under the veil of privacy if they prefer it. We are able to give some of the more striking instances recorded in the statistical inquiry which has been instituted. On the night of November 17th, 1890, Mr. S. Walker-Anderson, of Tickhill, Bawtry, Yorkshire, then in Australia, woke up in bed and distinctly saw the figure of his aunt, Mrs. Pickard, standing with her arms down near the foot of the bed, and dressed in an ordinary black dress, such as he had seen her wear many times. She looked older and stouter than when he had last seen her three years before, and moved her lips as though she said "Good-bye," then vanished by degrees. There was a lamp in the room, and he was fully awake. He had not been anxious about her, but on seeing the vision began to fear that she was dead and took a note of the time, which was about midnight. The mail brought news of her death at 11 a.m. on the 17th November. The Rev. Matthew Frost, of Bowers Gifford, Essex, states that on the first Thursday of April, 1887, while sitting at tea with his back to the window and talking to his wife, he plainly heard a rap at the window, and looking round said to his wife, "Why, there's my grandmother." He went to the door and even round the house, for he felt sure his grandmother was about, but could see no one. On the following Saturday he received news that his grandmother, who lived in Yorkshire, died about half an hour before he heard the raps. Miss P——, mistress in a high school, was walking by herself to the school on April 6th, 1887, after 8 o'clock in the morning, and distinctly saw her father. Three days before she had a presentiment of coming trouble and could not stay alone. Two telegrams to the school announced her father's illness and death on April 6th. The visual hallucinations recorded were not confined to known or living persons. Some were unrecognised, some incompletely developed, some of a religious or angelic character, some grotesque, horrible, or monstrous, others were figures of animals, lights, and inanimate or indefinite objects, while touches, as well as voices, sounds, and visions, were observed. The most remarkable fact brought out by the inquiry is that only a comparatively small percentage of these hallucinations were coincident with some actual event, such as the death of a friend.

An Electric Fire-Engine.

The fire-engine which we illustrate has been introduced by a firm of well-known electrical engineers. The frame of the machine is similar to that used by the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, but the steam-engine and boiler have been replaced by an electric motor which actuates the pump. The electricity is derived from the street electric mains by means of pillar contacts, which may be compared to hydrants. The motor is of the usual Siemens type, shunt-wound, and takes a current of 215 ampères at a pressure of 105 volts. With this supply of energy the pump sends a jet of water from a 1-inch nozzle to a height of 100 feet. The pressure of the water was 75 lbs. per square inch.



AN ELECTRIC FIRE-ENGINE.
(From a photograph. By permission of Messrs. Siemens Bros. & Co.)

A Grindstone Rest.

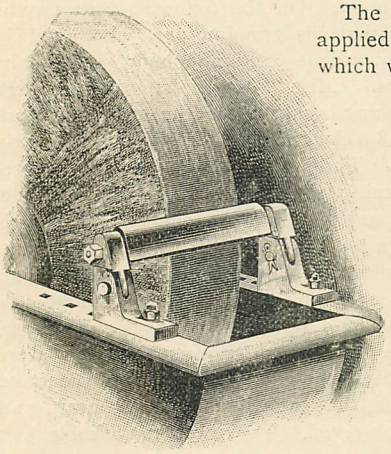
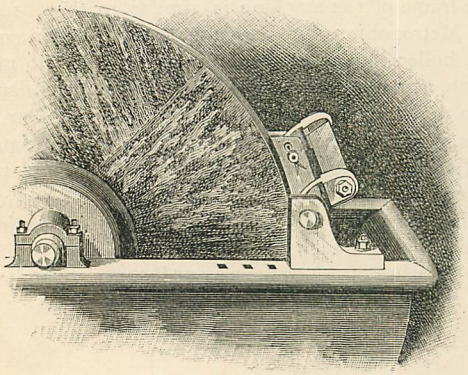


FIG. 1.

The rest for a tool applied to a grindstone, which we illustrate, is quite safe. So long as a downward pressure is applied, as in the case of grinding tools for turning and planing, the rest keeps firm, as in Fig. 1; but should the operator accidentally slip his fingers between the rest and the stone, and suddenly snatch them away, the rest takes the position of Fig. 2, and allows his fingers to be withdrawn before they are injured.



A GRINDSTONE REST.—FIG. 2.

Food and Oxygen.

According to the experiments of Dr. Marcet, a French physiologist, the quantity of air inhaled by different persons, in order to supply the system with oxygen and produce a certain amount of carbonic acid, varies very considerably. Three persons with ages from twenty-three to sixty years required 9·29, 10·51, and 11·30 litres of air respectively to produce 1 gramme of carbonic acid. He also finds that, during the first hour after a meal, the quantity of carbonic acid exhaled goes on increasing, and reaches a maximum in three or four hours after the meal, then falls off again. It is therefore clear that plenty of fresh air is desirable for three hours or more after a meal.

A Third Volume

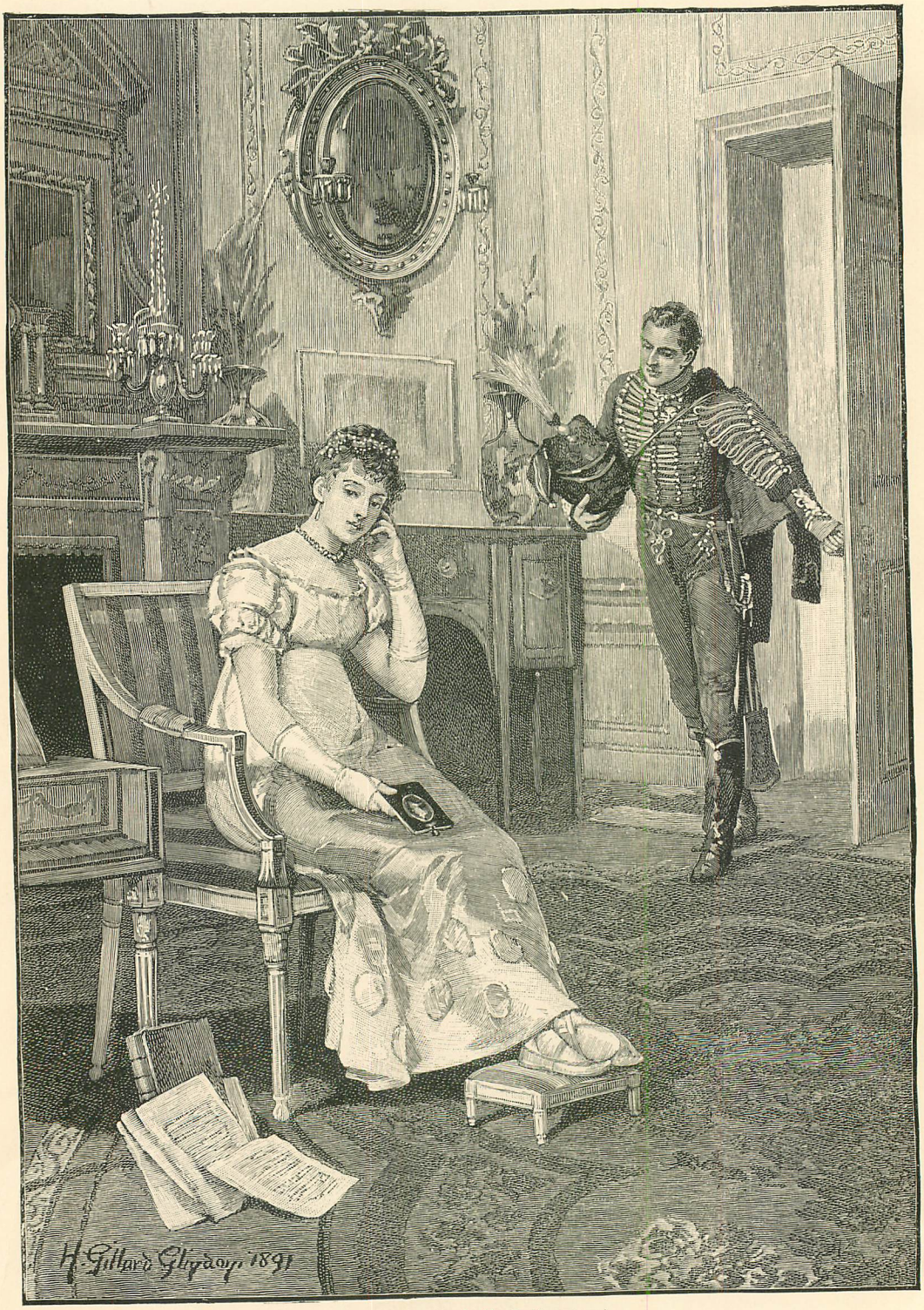
of "Cassell's Storehouse of General Information" has just been published, carrying on the work from *Castro* to *Deodar*, with the same completeness, as well as accuracy, which were the distinguishing features of the former volumes. Handy in size, clearly printed, and abundantly illustrated, this encyclopædia ought to prove both popular and serviceable.

"Voces Populi."

If by any chance, when Macaulay's New Zealander visits the ruins of London he should find any of our books surviving, and among them a copy of Mr. Anstey's "Voces Populi," he will be able to reproduce the exact conversational style of the latter end of the 19th century. Everybody knows the sketches, which have been appearing in Mr. *Punch's* pages, and many of our readers will, no doubt, be glad to have the second series, as it is now published in volume form by Messrs. Longmans, with Mr. Bernard Partridge's admirable illustrations. More truthful, accurate, and witty word-pictures it would be almost impossible to find than these of Mr. Anstey's.

A Character Sketch of Columbus.

"The Career of Columbus," by Mr. C. I. Elton, Q.C., published by Messrs. Cassell, is professedly more of a study of the man and his character than a record of his voyages and his privations. This year, the four-hundredth anniversary of his first great voyage has been celebrated, and it is therefore the more interesting to see what manner of man he was and to what influences he was subject. Here is Mr. Elton's account of the close of the first voyage, when the goal was almost in sight. The men were inclined to mutiny. "Then," says Mr. Elton, "they suddenly changed their minds. There were green rushes floating, and the men on the *Nina* saw a dog-rose briar covered with bloom, and a little stick with curious carving. Now they were all racing to earn the reward for the man who should first see land. On the evening of the 11th of October, after the *Salve Regina* had been sung, Columbus said that he would add a velvet coat as a special prize of his own. Looking out from the poop-cabin about ten o'clock, he thought that he saw a light moving up and down and vanishing sometimes, as if a torch was being carried about in a village. He called others to look at it, but they could not be quite sure about the matter. About two o'clock in the morning the *Pinta* fired a gun. The coast had been seen about two leagues off by a sailor called Roderigo de Triana. Being now arrived, the ships all lay by, and it seemed a long time before the morning came. The New World was found, and the reward was afterwards adjudged to Columbus, because he had been the first to see the light in the midst of the darkness." We learn much from our author of the traveller's life at Lisbon and on the Gold Coast, which did so much to prepare him fo his explorations, and we get graphic pictures of hin at home and under every aspect of his fortunes. All of this is alike profitable and interesting, along with the details of his travels, which are being called up by this year's anniversary.



(*From a drawing by* H. G. GLINDONI.)

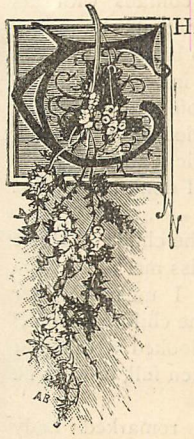
"SO NEAR, AND YET SO FAR."

LADY LORRIMER'S SCHEME.

By EDITH E. CUTHELL, Author of "The Story of a Glamour," "The Yacht in the Bay," etc. etc.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

"THE CHASE."



THE hunting season was in full swing in Loamshire. Though the world was drear, bare, and grey, the country houses were still full, mostly with house parties for the final *battues* of pheasants. So it happened there was a great gathering of country rank and fashion when the hounds met one rather drizzling morning at Cerne Court, for the first time since the young baronet's accession to the property. He himself, in his pink coat and top-boots, was standing on the steps, talking to Mr. Blayke, and throwing a cheery "Good-morning" to one after another of the sportsmen, who, dismounting on the broad sweep, passed into the wide hall to partake of "jumping powder" standing out on the billiard-table, or of more substantial refreshment provided in the dining-room. Cerne Court was always a favourite meet.

"Quite like old times, Sir Hubert," Mr. Blayke was saying; "and very glad we are to see the house open again. Shall we find in the Home Wood, think ye?"

"So Velveteens tells me, and the earths have been well stopped all over the hill. Pity if I can't keep a fox for you, and such a nice morning, too!"

"Oh, Hubert! I call it just horrid—half raining, and *so* damp. I shan't let baby go out to-day!"

It was Lady Edward, Sir Hubert's sister, who now stood at the front door behind him, well wrapped, and awaiting the carriage in which she was to follow as far as possible.

"Well, Irene, baby must learn to put up with a little wet if he's to grow up as hard a rider as his ancestors before him," laughed her brother, good-humouredly. "Ah! there's Lady Catherine," he added, as a rather heavy yellow-wheeled mail phæton appeared round the corner, driven by her stout ladyship from a high seat, beside which little Mr. Hunks seemed to shrink to less than his usual insignificance.

"How do, Sir Hubert? Mornin', Mr. Blayke; good scentin' day, eh? Your herd of Jerseys looks well in the park, Sir Hubert. You should see my new bull! First prize at the Royal, I hope. Mornin', Lady Edward. How's the boy?"

"Rather better for the change from London, thank you, Lady Catherine. But really this damp weather——"

"Yes, terrible, isn't it!" sighed Mr. Hunks from behind her ladyship, and out of the collar of his fur-lined coat. "This abominable climate!"

"Rubbish, Hunks! Just what we want for the lambs! And where's Lady Lorrimer, Sir Hubert? Oh, here she is!"

And Lilah herself, her tall fine figure showing to best advantage in a new habit by the best maker (not paid for), emerged on to the steps, smiling sweetly on everybody all round.

"Glad to see you are going to honour us, Lady Lorrimer!" cried the master, lifting his cap.

"Sir Hubert has kindly offered to mount me," she drawled, looking up at Mr. Blayke under her lashes. "But I only mean to ride about a little," she added.

"Just to show herself off in that habit!" sneered Augusta Gillinghame from the dog-cart to her sister on her hunter. "She knows how well she looks! Sir Hubert will be out of the run to-day, dallying at her bridle rein, if I'm not mistaken!"

Marjorie overheard the remark, and winced. She was on foot among the carriages and horses, having walked up from the village with old Miss Minchin. The latter was in mortal terror of the horses' hoofs, and not a little relieved when Mr. Adams joined them, and conveyed them to the shelter of Mrs. Bucknall's wagonette.

"So we've got a horse to-day, I perceive," remarked that lady to Marjorie, nodding in the direction of Lady Lorrimer, who was at that moment being mounted at the steps by Sir Hubert.

"We get everything we like here, I fancy," laughed Mr. Adams.

"You're ill-natured, Mr. Adams," said the canon's wife, with a smile. "She'll make you an excellent *châtelaine!*" she added, satirically.

Mr. Adams sniffed in a contemptuous manner, and Marjorie, looking on at the mounting process, felt her heart ache. Sir Hubert seemed an unconscionable time arranging Lady Lorrimer's neatly-booted foot in the stirrup, while she looked down upon him, smiling.

Lady Edward, in her Victoria with her small daughter, now passed by, for the hounds had moved off in the direction of the Home Wood, and there was a stir among horsemen, carriages, and the herd of foot people.

"Good-morning, Marjorie," she called out. "Come into tea and baby-worship this afternoon, will you?"

"And you too, Mr. Adams, and we will talk politics," added her husband, who did not hunt, and was following on foot.

"Now then, you two, I can't have you putting your heads together to undermine the opinions of my villagers!" laughed Sir Hubert to his brother-in-law and his rector, as he rode past with Lady Lorrimer.

"Shall we trot on, Sir Hubert?" she said, and carried him off across the park after the hounds.

"Lady Lorrimer staying much longer with you, Lady Edward?" called out Augusta Gillinghame from the high dog-cart.

But before the other could reply, Lady Catherine's loud voice—she was next in the line of vehicles proceeding at a foot's pace down the drive, because of the crush of horses in front—was heard saying—

"Lady Edward! Lady Edward! I've broken it to Sir Hubert. You must spare me Lady Lorrimer over at the Abbey next week for my big party."

But at that moment there was a general quickening of pace; the carriages all moved on. Marjorie and her companions were left behind, and saw no more of their occupants or of the hounds.

But about four o'clock in the afternoon, as Mrs. Bucknall was walking down the street at Great Morchard, she met a draggled muddy figure on a tired hunter, who, upon nearer inspection, turned out to be Bee Gillinghame, homeward bound.

"You've turned away early," said Mrs. Bucknall, knowing the young lady's hard-riding propensities. "I did not know you ever thought of leaving off till the hounds went home."

"An over-reach, Mrs. Bucknall, worse luck!" rejoined Miss Gillinghame. "I had to leave them in Burley Bottom, and running too, and take the mare home at a walk. We've had a nice run."

"How did Lady Lorrimer get on?"

Bee Gillinghame laughed loud.

"She 'rode about' with a vengeance. Sir Hubert spent the day piloting her so successfully and easily that she saw something of the run, though he, of course, was practically out of it."

"What devotion! and Sir Hubert generally in the first flight!"

"There's no doubt about how matters stand now, I should think. I wonder how long she'll stay on?"

"Lady Catherine has invited her to the Abbey."

"I wonder what Lady Edward thinks of it?" called out Bee, as the canon's wife turned into the rectory gates.

Just about that hour, up at Cerne Court, the old schoolroom was once more the scene of mirth and riot, though of a different kind to that which it witnessed in our opening chapter. Lady Edward Fitzbarne's three-year-old daughter sat astride on the shabby old sofa as on a coach-box, driving with scarlet knitted reins the huge good-natured Bruce, who stood, dejected but resigned, looking up inquiringly, as much as to ask how much longer his torture was going to last. Lady Edward herself sat on the deerskins which formed the hearthrug, an antimacassar over her head, playing bo-peep with her son and heir. This important personage was kicking, and giggling, and crowing in Nurse Merton's arms, as the old woman sat in Sir Hubert's great leather chair. She had come up on purpose to see "her grandchildren," as she called them, and had had tea in the housekeeper's room with Mrs. Perquisites. The meal had not been an unmitigated pleasure on either side. The old servant found it hard to put up with the airs of the newer and yet superior one, and Mrs. Merton had felt by no means sorry when summoned to the schoolroom.

It had pleased Irene, during this visit to her old home, to again take possession of the room which had been her schoolroom. Sir Hubert was far too good-natured to object to the inroads of Lady Edward and her babies, always provided that they did not interfere with his writing-table or with his confabs with his bailiff. This afternoon, however, Sir Hubert was out hunting, and no disturbance was to be feared, so the tea had been brought in on to the ink-stained table, and the little girl made free of the sofa and of Bruce.

"Now, Mollie! now take care," cried Lady Edward, "with that long whip! If you flick any of those papers about, your uncle will—will—I don't know what he'll do."

"He won't do nuffin!" laughed the child. "Uncle Hoobert never does do nuffin—but tiss me."

"Lor bless ye! miss—m' lady, I mean—Master Hubert's only too pleased to have the children about," said the old nurse. "Why, he's looked a different creetur lately, since the house has been full, to what he did a few months back."

"Peep, peep!—bo! bo! *bo!*" remarked Lady Edward, *crescendo*. "I'm *so* glad you think so, nursey. I know he looked worried in the autumn."

"'Twas that business about that poor young lady, maybe," went on the old woman, with her privileged freedom. "'Twas a bad business."

"I'm thankful it was no worse!" ejaculated Lady Edward, looking up with horror. "Think of marrying into a family with—well, insanity in it!"

"Oh! 'twas a Providence, m' lady, to be sure!—an escape indeed! And now Master Hubert do seem by way of gettin' settled, doesn't he?—if I may make so bold."

"Yes," said Lady Edward, a little doubtfully, "he does. Oh, baby! you'll pull my hair down!"

"Well, folks has got to marry to please 'emselves, and not to please other folks. There was a time when I'd hoped different, like. You're too young, Miss Irene, to remember anythink; but *I* do. However, we must be satisfied, I suppose."

"I suppose we must," replied Irene, again doubtfully.

"She's a fine one to look at—quite the grand lady. I hope she'll be good to my boy."

"She's *very* handsome, and people all seem to admire her very much. But somehow, nursey, I can't *quite*——"

The door opened, and Marjorie Aston was announced.

"Oh, Marjorie! here you are at last! Tea is ready, if these babies will allow us to have it in peace;" and Lady Edward jumped up and settled her friend in a chair by the fire.

Nurse Merton smiled at her across the hearthrug, over the baby's curls.

"Well, Miss Marjorie, this do seem like old times, don't it—allus exceptin' these babies—for us all to be a-settin' down in this room? If only Master Hubert was to come in, it would seem quite nat'ral, like."

"Indeed it would! Do you remember, Marjorie, that last night before Hubert went to India, the row we all made here?"

"Indeed I do," replied Marjorie, looking dreamily out into the little Dutch garden, fast growing dim. "What a long time ago it seems! Things have *so* changed."

"Oh no!" laughed Lady Edward. "You've not changed, and nursey here's not changed, and Hubert has not——"

"I'm none too sure o' that, Miss Irene," said the old woman gravely, looking across at Marjorie, who suddenly got very red, and jumped up to play with Mollie.

But Lady Edward had noticed too, and looked at her curiously while she turned away and began manipulating the teapot.

At that moment there was a *frou-frou* of silken garments in the passage without, and Lady Lorrimer sailed in, clad in a wondrous tea-gown.

"Oh! you've come back?" asked Lady Edward, in a rather chilly tone.

"Ye-es," drawled the lady. "I got rather tired, and Sir Hubert thought, as the hounds were running away from home——"

"You brought him back when the hounds were running!" ejaculated Lady Edward.

"On the contrary, he *insisted* on coming with me," replied the other, with a thin smile. "Well, Mollie," she added, going up to the sofa, "and what are you and Bruce playing at?"

"Go 'way! go 'way!" cried the child.

"Mollie!" warned her mother.

"I *shall* be wude if I like! She comes and 'turbs everyfing."

Lady Lorrimer laughed a little, and turned away, patting Bruce as she passed. Whether it was that that animal's patience was exhausted, and that this attention of Lady Lorrimer's was the last straw, we know not: anyhow, he uttered a low growl of displeasure.

"Bruce, for shame!" cried Lady Edward. "Lady Lorrimer, may I give you some tea?"

"No, thanks," drawled the other. "Sir Hubert has ordered a cup of soup for me. I'm going to have it with him in the smoking-room;" and she swept herself and her long train out of the schoolroom.

A little later, Nurse Merton having taken the children up to the nursery to give herself the delightful treat of putting them to bed, Marjorie found herself alone with Irene.

"I wish you'd tell me, Marjorie," asked the other wistfully, as she helped her friend to put on her jacket, prior to leaving: "I *wish* you'd tell me what you think of *her*."

"Of who?" asked Marjorie evasively.

"Of Lady Lorrimer, of course. Oh, Marjorie! I don't know what to think of this affair. Now, you have known Lady Lorrimer longer than I."

"Ye-es, I have," answered the other, looking straight into the garden, and avoiding Lady Edward's searching gaze.

"*I* must honestly say that I don't feel—well, *drawn* to her exactly. I don't know quite what it is; I can't explain the feeling."

"*I* quite understand it," assented Marjorie.

"And yet it is such an important thing; I feel so anxious and worried about it. Dear old Hubert! we *do* so want to see him happy, don't we, Marjorie?"

"Yes," answered Marjorie, with slight hesitation, and in a low voice. "We want—to see—Hubert—happy."

And she passed out into the hall.

Lady Edward walked over to the fire, and stood looking gravely into it.

"Nursey thought I was too young to remember, did she? Why, I can see those two together in this room as if it were yesterday!" she added. "Poor Marjorie!"

After a few moments' reflection she bestirred herself and went out into the hall, pausing a few seconds at the library door, whence came the sound of her husband's and Mr. Adams' voices in political argument.

"The rector asked me to let him know when Marjorie was ready to go, that he might see her home, but I don't think I will, though. I fancy poor Marjorie would rather not."

And Lady Edward went up to the nursery to hear Mollie say her prayers.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

"NECESSITY KNOWS NO LAW."

THE stream of carriages had begun rolling up the drive, and Lady Lorrimer, ready dressed, had dismissed Rosalie, and was giving herself a few finishing touches in private. Clad in red satin, the exact brilliant shade to set off her dark beauty, her white neck standing out in snowy contrast, she looked superbly handsome. She wore the Lorrimer diamonds, a tiara in her dark hair, and a *rivière* round her neck. Old Sir John Lorrimer had got them during the loot of Delhi, and had bestowed them in his infatuation upon his beautiful young bride. Now, no one but herself and her jeweller, and perhaps Rosalie, guessed that the gems had long been replaced by the best imitation the Parisian Diamond Company could produce, and that Lady Lorrimer was, or rather had been, all the more flush of ready money, and looked none the worse as regarded her ornaments.

To-night, however, when she found herself alone, a very harassed expression replaced her usual calm, radiant look.

"To think I should be run to earth like this—that I should find myself in such a fix after all the trouble I've taken: after the bother with that child! To think that something must be done, and *at once!* Oh! for two hundred pounds just to throw to these howling wolves, and stop their mouths for a few days, till Hubert—— Yes, Hubert *must* be got up to the scratch immediately, if not sooner. Once the marriage is announced, I shall be safe for a while. He must be clenched to-night—to-night. You're in good form, Lilah"—she smiled at her own reflection—"you

ought to be able to bring him to the point to-night;" and she turned away and went down the broad stairs into the already crowded hall, where guests were fast arriving.

The long suite of rooms was filling rapidly. Lady Catherine, who abhorred society, and only gave a sort of compulsory party once a year, was standing at the door of the white drawing-room, receiving her guests, hideously gowned in crimson velvet, and with the celebrated Loamshire pearls on her fat red neck, and almost extinguishing her little husband, who stood meekly behind her, as if he had no business in the place at all.

Lady Lorrimer strolled through the rooms, greeting acquaintances, the admired of all beholders.

"*What* a charming gown!" whispered some country maiden.

"Yes, I must say she knows how to dress," replied Mrs. Bucknall.

"Lor! look at her di'monds!" ejaculated the brewer's wife from Loamhampton.

"What a herd!" drawled Lady Lorrimer, sweeping the assembled multitude from under her lashes.

"Always is here," replied Miss Gillinghame.

"Dear old Lady Catherine is good nature and absence of social perspicacity itself. All Loamshire is here—a lot of people one never sees except out hunting or at Primrose meetings, and that one does not quite recognise in evening dress. How do you do, Lord Edward?" she added. "This sort of gathering ought to please your Radical soul!"

"Except that I'm not quite sure—I've not quite made up my mind if I ought to wear, or even possess, a dress suit, because my fellow man lacks one!"

"Then how wicked diamonds must be!" cried Miss Gillinghame. "I *must* admire yours, Lady Lorrimer. You outblaze everyone in the room!"

Lady Lorrimer smiled sweetly at her.

Just then Arthur Gillinghame came up.

"I—aw—wanted to ask you, Lady Lorrimer," he began, confidentially, "if you hear how that poor little Marshall girl is? Awful sad business, is it not?"

"I hear badly of her," replied the other, after a moment's hesitation, and an imperceptible start. "Sir Luke Lancet had her moved down to Brighton to try sea air. It seems she's caught cold on the journey—pneumonia or something. Oh! it's indeed most distressing!"

"No constitution!" drawled the other. "Splendid points, but too fine bred, aw!" he continued; for Arthur Gillinghame's metaphors always, somehow, took an equine turn. "Paw little thing! Like my new button-hole, Lady Lorrimer?" he added. "Had a dozen down by train to choose from."

But before Lady Lorrimer could pass an opinion on such an important question, Hubert came up and greeted her gravely. Behind him followed Mr. Hunks, beaming.

"Been lookin' for you everywhere, Sir Hubert. I want to take you round some of my little knick-knacks. Lady Lorrimer, will you honour us with your company, if you're not weary of them?"

"Oh, Mr. Hunks! as if one could *ever* get tired of such things," she gushed. "Come, Sir Hubert."

They were taken first into into the red drawing-room to see the Louis XV. furniture and the old Sèvres. Then they passed into the morning-room, which was devoted to the Empire style and *bibelots*.

"And this is *my* boudoir," laughed Mr. Hunks, leading them through a side door into quite a small room. "Lady Catherine says she doesn't want a boudoir. She has a room to see the bailiff in, and where she can walk about in muddy boots. So I have appropriated this little snuggery, and enshrined my Wedgwood in it," he added, pointing to the walls, which were covered from ceiling to floor with a priceless collection.

"What treasures! And what a pretty way to arrange them!" ejaculated Lady Lorrimer.

"Yes," remarked her host, with the selfish complacency of a *bric-à-brac* maniac. "I *think* I've about got the best Wedgwood collection in England now."

"And you've been going in for snuff-boxes too, I see," put in Sir Hubert, examining a red velvet table in the centre, entirely covered with gems of that description.

"Well, I can't say I've been 'going in' for them, Sir Hubert. I'm rather bitten with the idea, and I've been keeping my eyes open, and picking up here and there. This, for instance, is a neat thing—late Louis XIV., I think. I lit upon it by mere accident at an old Italian villa in Piedmont last autumn. Owner did not know what it was worth—no, I won't tell you what I gave for it, but——" (and he mentioned a well-known dealer) "offered me five hundred for it."

"Gold, I suppose?" asked Lady Lorrimer, examining it curiously close to the lamp.

"Of course. But it's the engraving and the paste set round it—very fine cut and colour that paste."

"Five hundred for a little bit of a box like that!" laughed Sir Hubert.

"Every man to his liking," Mr. Hunks retorted, good-humouredly. "I suppose you'd sooner have a hunter, or you a dress, m' lady!"

At that moment a footman appeared in the doorway.

"Please, sir, m' lady says will you come to her at once!"

"Oh yes, yes," replied Mr. Hunks, starting up, quite flustered. "I'm coming—I'm coming. Will you excuse me, Lady Lorrimer?" And, tearing himself away from his beloved treasures, the little man hurried obediently off.

Lady Lorrimer heaved a sigh of relief, and sank on a low divan.

"It's pleasanter in here than with the mob, eh, Hubert?" she asked, looking up at him under her lashes.

Hubert sat down beside her—very close beside her.

"You are really going back to town soon?"

"To-morrow," she said, twirling a huge red ostrich feather fan, and looking at him over the top of it.

"To-morrow? Oh, Lilah!" Then, after a little pause, during which he crossed and uncrossed his legs, and fidgeted with his watch-chain: "You won't come over to Cerne for a bit? Irene is staying on."

"HUBERT SAT DOWN BESIDE HER" (*p.* 708).

She played with her fan, and answered in a low voice:

"No, no, Hubert; I don't think I'd better go back to Cerne."

"Lilah! What do you mean by that?" he asked earnestly. "Lilah, tell me!" he added, in a beseeching voice.

Her bosom heaved, as if with suppressed emotion, her breath fanned his hair, and the ostrich feathers in her hand quivered. But her lids drooped, and she made no reply.

"Tell me, Lilah!" he reiterated. "Why should you not come? I miss you, Lilah—I want you."

She gave him one glance of her beautiful eyes.

"Hubert, you press me ungenerously. Can't you guess—don't you see—people are talking—I cannot——"

"Let them talk!" he exclaimed, defiantly. "What is that to you and me, Lilah?" and he tried to take the hand that held the fan.

"It is not only that," she cried suddenly, almost with anguish, and with her eyes lifted to his with sudden passion. "It is—it is, oh! why do you wring it from me? It is that I cannot bear it myself; I must

get away, Hubert; we must part!" and her head bowed on her bosom, which was shaken almost as if by a sob.

"Part, Lilah!" he exclaimed; he had seized the hand now. "Never! why should we? Lilah, Lilah! my beautiful Lilah! Listen! come to Cerne as——"

"Sir Hubert! Sir Hubert!" a loud big voice cried in the next room; "where are you?"

He started up abruptly, his sentence unfinished, while Lady Lorrimer's eyes flashed with a momentary rage, and her hand clenched with temper as Lady Catherine entered.

"Oh, here you are! I've been looking for you everywhere! Do, like a good fellow, come at once, and take old Lady Smith down to supper. She'll never speak to me again if I don't send her down in her proper precedence;" and his hostess laid a large strong hand almost forcibly on his arm, and carried him off.

Lady Lorrimer's face, as she was left in the boudoir alone, assumed a vindictive expression of malice most unpleasant to look upon.

"The old fool!" she muttered, grinding her teeth. "At the very moment—— But, anyhow, she's brought it on herself now!" she added, suddenly rising, and sweeping a stealthy look round the room, advanced to the red velvet table.

Never in his life, poor Sir Hubert thought, had he known anyone eat such a supper as old Lady Smith. She seemed to keep him for hours absolutely writhing with impatience, while he plied her with almost every viand upon the supper table.

"I devoutly hope she'll be ill to-morrow: she richly deserves it!" he muttered angrily to himself, as he settled the lady again in the drawing-room, and flew in search of Lady Lorrimer.

He had just tracked her to the conservatory on the arm of Arthur Gillinghame, that youth's pasty countenance irradiated with a fatuous smile, when Lord Edward came up to him.

"Hubert, Irene wants to go. Her head aches, and we've a long drive. Are you ready?"

The good brother suppressed an ejaculation at being thwarted yet a second time. He cast a despairing look in the direction of the conservatory where Lady Lorrimer and young Gillinghame were probably admiring the orchids and discussing button-holes, and then resigned himself to the inevitable, and went in search of the cloak-room.

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CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

"WILL YOU WISH ME LUCK?"

"OH, Marjorie, you really might have come in sooner! I've such news for you! I've been dying to talk it over! What *do* you think Mrs. Smith has come over and told me?"

Mrs. Aston, knitting by the fire, looked up with these remarks as Marjorie entered.

"Well, mother?" she remarked, wearily, throwing off her hat and jacket.

"Dear, you really might try and take a little interest, now! What *do* you think happened at the big party at the Abbey two nights ago? I do wish you'd gone, Marjorie; by the bye, Lady Catherine will get quite tired of sending us her big cards——"

"I didn't want to go, mother," put in Marjorie.

"You never do want to do what I want you to," grumbled the mother, ungrammatically and incoherently. "But listen! Farmer Smith was over there yesterday at Lady Catherine's monthly fat beast sale, and the place was all agog with it, his wife says. It appears that one of Mr. Hunks' beautiful knick-knacks was stolen at the party—a piece of plate, a bit of china, or a curio of some kind, nobody seems exactly to know what. Only fancy, Marjorie!"

"Poor Mr. Hunks! How annoyed he must feel!" Marjorie replied, absently.

"I've always heard that art-collectors have no conscience," pursued Mrs. Aston. "I dare say this, whatever it is, has been taken by someone who wanted to complete their own set, or by some waiter bribed by a *bric-à-brac* dealer. That's the idea, I believe. Come, Marjorie, you might say something. It's a most exciting business!"

Marjorie, who had been down to Great Morchard, was kneeling by the fire, warming her hands, half-frozen with driving. She looked up at her mother with eyes that were wet with tears.

"I can't feel excited about it, mother dear," she answered, gently. "I got the second post letters at Great Morchard, and—and—here's one from Mr. Marshall. Effie is——" and she leant her head on her mother's lap, and burst into quiet tears.

"DEAR MISS ASTON"—(the letter ran)—"You were always so good to my poor child in her happier days, and she was so fond of you, that I take a sad pleasure in myself writing to let you know that her troubles are over at last, and her sweet pure spirit is at peace. She had no strength to withstand the consequences of this fatal chill, and the end came very rapidly; but I trust, as far as we could judge from her clouded mind, without much suffering, thank God! You, down in Loamshire, will be seeing Hubert Erle. Will you let him hear this sad news? I thought, at one time, my poor child and he seemed attached to each other. But it was not to be. Anyhow, I like to think of him, too, as one of Effie's friends."

About the same time and hour the affair at the Abbey was being bruited about the hunting-field. It was a grey morning, with a sharp north wind blowing.

Mr. Blayke was not in the best of tempers. They had drawn several coverts blank, and when at last, in Carston Wood, they found a fox, he had been headed back. The field, not averse to finding shelter, were grouped in the centre of the big wood, where four ridings met, smoking and eating sandwiches, their horses fidgeting in the cold, while Mr. Blayke and his merry men plunged in and out of the dense covert with much sounding of the horn and vituperation of the hounds.

"Much too raw a day for any scent to lie!" growled one old farmer to another, as though the person spoken to was answerable for the state of the atmosphere.

"I'd liefer be over at Giggleswade Markit."

"Good sale at Leddy Cath'rine's yesterday?"

"Middlin'—only middlin'," answered the other grumbler.

"Bad business that over at the Abbey, eh? Woa,

then! can't you stand still?" remarked a dapper young lawyer from Loamhampton, first to his neighbour the brewer, and then to his horse.

"About that robbery, you mean?" asked the brewer, who had not been invited to the party, and wished to conceal the fact from the lawyer, who had. "Bad job for old Hunks. But he's got enough and to spare of those sort of things."

"Oh, magnificent collection, ye know! Why, the Louez Says china in that inner drawing-room's a sight. Don't you think so?"

"I suppose it is," fenced the other; "but really I don't understand '*objecs de virtue*,' ye know. Some waiter, I suppose, or a servant? Well, it won't break him, as you say."

"Heard of poor Mr. Hunks' loss, Sir Hubert?" asked Bee Gillinghame, who had been assiduously, though slowly, edging up the riding through the ranks of the loiterers, regardless of how many horses she fidgeted, in her anxiety for a little conversation with the young baronet, who sat apart, rather moody, smoking. "But really one cannot very much pity Lady Catherine; and of course Mr. Hunks—we all know who *he* was—can't know anything. If she *will* throw the Abbey open, as it was the other night, to such a mob of people——"

"I understand," replied Sir Hubert, ignoring the ill-natured sneer, "he is more disturbed because it was the germ of an embryo collection he was getting together. He showed it me himself."

"What an old idiot!" laughed Miss Gillinghame. "Have the police any clue?" and Miss Gillinghame turned to a stout county magistrate on his weight-carrier.

"I regret to say," returned the representative of justice pompously, "that Mr. Hunks has not seen fit to place it in the hands of the police at all. I saw him yesterday in Loamhampton, and in spite of my remonstrances he declined to proceed against person or persons unknown."

"He has an idea of *noblesse oblige* about the whole business, I fancy," put in Hubert Erle. "He says all there that night were his guests—that the rights of hospitality—and so on."

"Fancy that old boy with his *noblesse oblige!*" sneered Miss Gillinghame. "But hark! wasn't that a halloa?"

And in less time than it takes to tell, cigars were thrown away, reins tightened, horses mounted, as, in response to a glad ringing shout of "Gone 'way!" from the far end of the big wood, there ensued a jostling and a galloping down the green ride in that direction.

Quite late that afternoon, as it was growing dusk in the muddy lanes under the leafless trees, Sir Hubert, jogging homewards on a tired hunter, his pink coat and his doeskin breeches all bespattered, became aware of a familiar figure walking ahead of him. He stirred up his horse a little, and when he came up with the pedestrian, flung himself to the ground, passing the bridle through his arm.

"Good-evening, Marjorie! How are you? I've seen nothing of you for ages."

"You've been so busy with your visitors, Sir Hubert," she answered, rather wearily; while at the same time Mr. Marshall's fatal message came into her mind and filled her with gloom.

"Yes, I've had a houseful, indeed. I like having Irene about the old place again, and those babies. Then Lady Lorrimer's capital at arguing, and has kept Edward in order. She's so clever, is Lady Lorrimer; don't you think so, Marjorie?"

"I—I don't know her well," replied poor Marjorie, staring straight in front of her down the dusky lane. "How can I tell him?" she kept saying to herself.

"Nonsense! But you must, you shall, Marjorie," he continued quite eagerly, turning to her. "I want you *very* much to know Lady Lorrimer, Marjorie—to know her well. I want you particularly, Marjorie. We are such *old* friends; I am anxious for you to like her."

"Shall I?" Marjorie could not resist saying.

"Of course you will. Lilah Lorrimer is a woman among a thousand," he went on, waxing quite eloquent. "She is no mere child: she has mind and intellect: she is a woman who has lived and suffered. Then she's so clever! I'm quite out of it when she talks sometimes to clever fellows like Edward Fitzbarne. Oh, you'll like her immensely, Marjorie, I'm sure, for you're clever yourself in a sort of a way, you know. You have such a knack of understanding what people think and feel."

Marjorie felt very hurt—not selfishly at all; she had been wounded already too deeply to be pained by another blow—but it was for the memory of the dead girl, whose untimely fate had haunted her all day.

"Oh, very well, Sir Hubert," she said, rather coldly. "If I see Lady Lorrimer again I'll try, upon your recommendation, to appreciate her more."

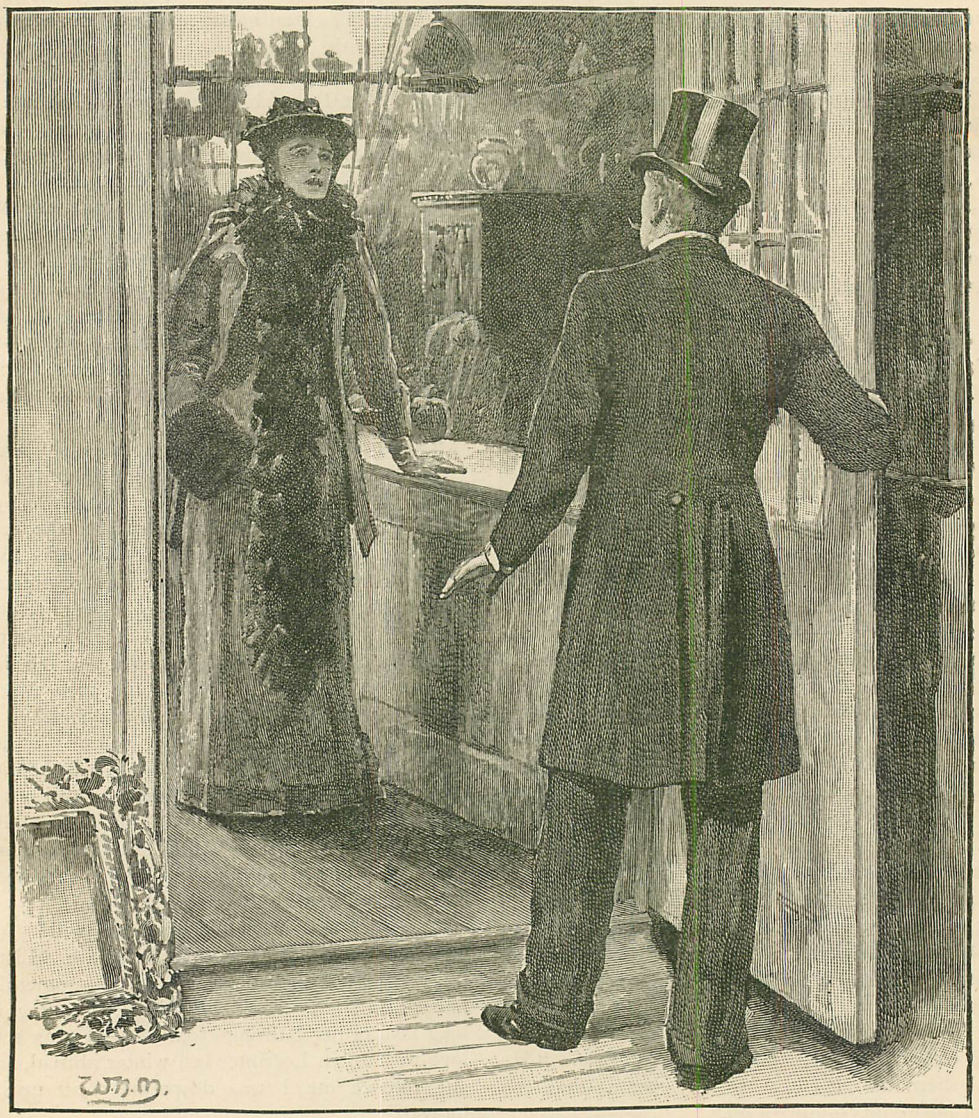
"See her again? Of course you will! Marjorie, you're not so nice as you generally are. Listen! I'll tell you something—as an old friend—something I've never told Irene, even," he added, fidgeting with the long lash of his hunting-crop. "I—I was awfully in love with Lilah Lorrimer last winter abroad, and when she refused me I was desperately cut up: I was, indeed."

He waited an instant for a little sympathetic assent; but for the life of her Marjorie could not find it in her to say a word, and there was no sound save the squashing of hoofs and footsteps in the mire, and the whistling of the abominable north wind through the bare branches.

"And this winter," he went on, "seeing and hearing her again, it's all come over me once more! And she—I think—she has altered towards me—I—I can't help fancying—somehow, that all along—she did—really and truly—care—for me—it seems impossible—incredible—a fellow like me——"

"A fellow like you!" echoed poor Marjorie's heart. But her tongue clave to the roof of her mouth.

"Anyhow," he cried, with a swish of his whip, which startled even the tired hunter, "I've made up my mind to try again! Faint heart, etc.—never say die—and all that sort of thing! I'm going up to London



"SHE . . . PUT OUT A HAND TO STEADY HERSELF" (*p.* 714).

to-morrow to try again. What say you, Marjorie? Won't you wish me luck?"

And he stood stock-still there in the mud, and fixed her, and—for the life of her she never knew how she managed it—she wished him success.

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

"RUN TO EARTH."

THERE was always a little gathering at Loamhampton Station when the 10.14 London express was due. The trainlet from Great Morchard jogged up, and waited humbly in a siding till the great London express should have rushed in and halted a moment or two. It brought Sir Hubert Erle, who, when he set foot on the platform, was aware of a little man in a vast fur-lined coat, overshadowed by a tall footman bearing a huge fur rug, conversing with the obsequious station-master, while porters with foot-warmers and boys with the daily papers hovered, watchful, in the rear. He was none other than the great Mr. Hunks, of the Abbey, who, if report could be credited, had begun life by sweeping out a counting-house.

The two men greeted each other, but when the express came thundering up Sir Hubert went first-class, smoking; and Mr. Hunks never smoked. It was a luxury he had not afforded himself in his youth, and he had never acquired it since.

This morning, however, Sir Hubert smoked but little. He flung away his cigar before it was half finished; he

fidgeted in his corner of the carriage; he half-read and threw down, one after another, the papers; he was restless and pre-occupied. All the world seemed "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable," till he should again see Lilah Lorrimer's eyes looking into his, as they had looked that night at the Abbey, and hear from her own lips that she loved him.

When the train stopped at the next station, Sir Hubert hastily gathered up his belongings and fled into Mr. Hunks' carriage. He was in the mood when any company, anyone to talk to, is better than solitude. Mr. Hunks, when you got him apart from his overpowering wife, was by no means deficient in ideas.

"Very sorry to hear about that uncomfortable business the night of your pleasant party, Mr. Hunks," Sir Hubert began.

"Well, yes; but I'm sorry it's got about the country so. My wife never *can* hold her tongue! It is not like an ordinary theft. They might have taken any modern bit of plate three times the value, and I shouldn't have cared. But these things that one discovers for oneself, that one delights in! It's like losing a child or a dog! Money won't comfort me."

"What steps are you going to take about it?"

"None at all," answered the other. "What's the use? If it were taken for the value of the gold, it is melted down long ago. If for its art value, the police are no good. But I am pretty well known to the dealers both here and on the Continent, and sooner or later I shall, through them, come upon the traces of my pretty little box. These sort of things can't be hid."

"Are you going up to Christie's sale to-day?"

"Oh no; there's nothing worth going for. But, as I'm a bit sick of snuff-boxes just now (you can't think how that box being gone brings down the value of the collection!), I'm running round to one or two places I know after some prints I've heard of. I've a niece going to be married, and I want to give her something good. I always give antique things for presents—then people can't have duplicates of them."

"A present," repeated Sir Hubert, thoughtfully. "Well, do you know *I* want to give a present to-day? I think something antique would be just the thing. Where would you recommend me to go?"

"That depends what you want."

"Ah! something personal—for a lady," replied Sir Hubert, and then he added to himself: "Something very nice, chaste and uncommon, a little *souvenir*, just of *to-day*. I'll give her diamonds on our wedding day!"

"Oh! if that's the sort of thing," answered Mr. Hunks, with a little smile at the good-looking young fellow opposite, "you can't do better, if you can spare the time, than to come with me to a little place where I'm going. The old scoundrel picks up nice things somehow, and if you were to go alone he'd swindle you fearfully."

Sir Hubert looked at his watch.

"Yes, I shall have plenty of time to go with you, if you'll be so kind. (I can't well call till after lunch," he added to himself. "But the moment after lunch, to catch her before she goes out driving.)"

And so it came to pass that Sir Hubert found himself in a hansom with Mr. Hunks, threading his way through a *terra incognita*. They finally alighted at a dingy little broker's shop, to the door of which came a greasy-looking individual, who appeared to recognise Mr. Hunks at once.

"Well, Spendhel," began the latter, "anything to show me to-day, eh?"

"I jus come back from Christiania, Mishter Hunks, shir. I bicked up some nice little shings, what worsh your lookin' at, sir, very worsh."

And he led the way through the shop to a still dingier little den behind, divided from it by a glass door in an appalling state of griminess.

"Now sit you down, gentlemens, and I vill show. Sish gentleman," looking at Sir Hubert, "I hab not zhe honour. Vhat vill he see?"

"He's a friend of mine, Spendhel. Show away."

The old man opened a cupboard, and took down a silver-gilt cup.

"Now, dish 'ere, dish very nice. Dish a *verein*—a guild cup, you call it. Take, Mr. Hunks, and see yourself."

Mr. Hunks turned it up, looked at the mark a second, and grunted.

"Oh! she trouble I had in Norway wid she beoples—you no idea, shir. Shay dat vicked beoples she Norvegians—shay flood she country wid she copies of she old silver, and as for she old silver himself—vhy, shays dat fools shay shooner shell their own childrens than their old silver. Oh! a lot of trouble I had, Mr. Hunks, shir. Money won't pay me for she trouble, not at all," he groaned, shaking his head, and handing down another cup and a set of spoons for inspection.

"That's not the sort of thing at all, is it?" asked Mr. Hunks, looking across at Sir Hubert.

"It's all old—old as she hills—quite genuine," hastily put in Spendhel. "I lay my life——"

"No need," quietly rejoined Mr. Hunks. "The gentleman wants to see something personal—would do for a present to a lady."

"A present to a lady!" ejaculated the dealer. "She very shing I got. Shomeshing goot, very nice indeed." And he turned away, and began rummaging in the chaotic confusion of the glass cupboard, where all sorts of antiquities were huddled together. Mr. Hunks followed him and stood by him, rummaging too, and Hubert got up, and from his superior height looked over them both.

"She very thing; I find him directly. I put him in here. A Louis XV. paste chatelaine—oh! shomething very good indeed. You'll see——"

He was interrupted by the opening of the glass door in the far corner of the room, and a boy putting his head in.

"Zt! Zt, mister! That lady what come yesterday called agin. Says she wants the rest of her money," he added, in a stage whisper.

"All right, all right, I——" began Spendhel, half turning round, while Mr. Hunks eagerly went on turning over the contents of the shelves.

"And means to wait and get it, too, you'd better

say," added a voice from the shop, a sneering, drawling voice, which, in spite of his never having heard it pitched exactly in that key before, Sir Hubert instantly recognised.

He gave a start and a bound, and pushing aside the astonished boy, threw back the door, and then stood transfixed.

"Lilah!"

She gave a smothered cry, and put out a hand to steady herself against the dirty counter. But before either of them had time to think, Mr. Hunks' voice was heard in exultation from the vicinity of the cupboard.

"Erle! Erle! A miracle! I have found it!" and he hurried to the doorway, brandishing the lost gold snuff-box.

Then he, too, stopped short, paralysed with astonishment.

"Lady Lorrimer!"

* * * *

Down in Loamshire that evening Miss Minchin's working party was over about sunset. There was a spring feeling about the world as the rector escorted Miss Aston home down the lane. The marvellously elaborate and delicate tracery of the bare plantations stood out against the clear sunset sky. The days were growing perceptibly longer, and there was a suspicion of the song of birds in the air.

Mr. Adams, however, was strangely silent and preoccupied. It was Marjorie who kept up a rather forced and desultory conversation till they reached the stile leading to the path over the meadows to Studley Grange, where she stopped, and held out her hand to bid the rector good-night.

"Miss Aston," he began, hesitatingly, his eyes bent on the ground, "may I say something to you?"

Marjorie gave a little gasp.

"It is only this," he continued: "I'm thinking of sending in my resignation to the bishop—of leaving Cerne."

"Of leaving Cerne?" and Marjorie raised her soft dark eyes inquiringly to his. He met her glance, and, feeling encouraged, went on.

"Yes, Miss Aston, I must leave Cerne. I cannot, must not, stay here any longer; it is becoming too—too painful to me! I have an offer of—more congenial work—in a crowded part of the East End. I feel I ought to go, unless—and it lies with you, Miss Aston—unless *you* ask me to stay!"

"I?" cried poor Marjorie, looking anxiously round for a means of escape.

"Nay, stay and hear me," the young rector added pleadingly. "You are always kind! It is just this—you must have noticed, you must know—how I—love you!"

There was a pause. Marjorie, distressed, could find no words. Edgar Adams advanced a step nearer.

"You have always been kind, sympathetic, Miss Aston. Could I hope, in the very *least*, I would wait—oh, so patiently! If you tell me to leave Cerne——"

"Leave Cerne?" moaned Marjorie, wringing her hands. "What would I not give to leave Cerne?"

"You would!" exclaimed the other, entirely misconstruing her meaning, while his face lit up with a wonderful joy. "Leave Cerne! Miss Aston—Marjorie! You and I together, we will live, and work, and toil——"

"Ah!" gasped Marjorie. "There is nothing like work!"

"With you at my side, Marjorie, as my wife, to help me, I could *indeed* work, I feel it! Oh, give me a little hope!"

"You would take me away—from Cerne?" she asked, like one in a dream, lifting her eyes to his. "Oh, I would do anything to get away from Cerne!"

They were ungracious words, even taken in the sense he took them, but he caught at them as a drowning man catches at a straw.

"My Marjorie! Trust me, love me! I will do *any*thing you wish!" and he caught her hand and tried to draw her to him.

But she shrank away from him.

"No, no, not that! I must think—I must have time."

"I will wait—wait till you bid me come! I will accept the East End parish—we will leave Cerne——"

"But *you* do not know," groaned Marjorie.

"I don't want to," returned the other, stoutly. "It is enough for me that you will leave Cerne, that you ask me to wait! It is more, almost, than in my wildest dreams——" and he stooped and kissed her hand in lowly reverence.

"I will wait," he repeated, "and then I will come again."

And he turned on his heel and disappeared up the darkening lane.

"I am doing him a wrong," she moaned to herself. "But to leave Cerne! Oh, only to leave Cerne!"

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

"FAITHFUL AND TRUE."

FEBRUARY is generally a deadly-lively month in the depth of the country, and Loamshire was not sorry to have something to talk about. The mysterious disappearance, and the equally extraordinary re-appearance, of Mr. Hunks' *bibelot* furnished abundant food for conversation. Nobody, with the exception of Mr. Hunks and of Sir Hubert, who held their tongues, and of Mr. Spendhel, who was not asked, knew the true facts of the case, so the Loamshire gossips were able to invent and to contradict each other to their hearts' content.

Another mystery, almost equally important, was the absence of any climax in the Erle and Lorrimer flirtation. The match-makers were disappointed. What had exactly taken place no one knew, but it transpired that Lady Lorrimer had given up her flat and gone abroad.

But in the meantime there came a sudden startling piece of news which quite put the snuff-box episode and Lady Lorrimer out of people's heads. Sir Hubert Erle was shutting up the Court and going away for a

year. He told Marjorie the news himself one morning after church.

"I shouldn't have liked you to hear of it from strangers first; we're such old friends, you and I," he said. They were standing in the leafless avenue, the rooks cawing overhead, having left the church by the private gate which led into the Court grounds.

"And look here, Marjorie," he went on: "don't you think you might write to me now and then, as you used to do long ago? When I was away abroad before, I often used to think of you at Cerne; you always seem part and parcel of the place."

At his words the years seemed to roll away for Marjorie, and the sweet past to have returned. But she shook her head.

"I cannot promise. I might—not always be at Cerne."

"I can't imagine the place without you. But it would be kind, Marjorie—it would, indeed; and I've been very bothered lately."

She half assented, only anxious to get away from him. Hubert's proffers of friendship, his allusions to the past, were more than she could bear, and they parted.

That week the hounds again met at Cerne Court. There were no ladies now at the Court, and in spite of the usual hospitality, the old house seemed dull. Sir Hubert, in fact, had just arranged it for a long absence. However, he appeared, mounted on a young, half-broken hunter he had hitherto ridden but lately.

Marjorie did not walk up to the meet; she wished to avoid seeing Hubert Erle again. So she sat over the fire at home, helping Mrs. Aston "finish off" some "poor" work, quite oblivious of the fact that the hounds, having, as usual, found a fox in the Home Wood, were running him at a rattling pace over the pastures, down the hill towards Studley withe bed on the river bank. Marjorie was very silent—she generally was now—but Mrs. Aston was maundering on over the buttons and tapes.

"There, that's another done! Marjorie, how slowly you work to-day! Really, child, you might do better than sit dreaming there." After a pause: "I saw Mr. Adams again yesterday, poor fellow!"

No response from Marjorie. Edgar Adams had kept his promise: he was waiting patiently indeed, but he was frantic in his endeavours to secure Mrs. Aston on his side, and not altogether without success. In season and out of season, Mrs. Aston descanted upon his merits, and upon Marjorie's wrong-headedness in not perceiving them.

"Really, Marjorie," she continued—"where are the scissors?—I can't understand you at all over this business. That man will live to be a bishop, it's my belief; he's so clever. You don't half appreciate him."

"Indeed, mother, indeed I do!"

"And you never think for a moment, I believe, what it will be to me to lose you—what I shall do without you. Really——"

She was interrupted by Elizabeth, who half opened the door, and popped in a head in which the eyes were nearly starting out of a white, horror-stricken face, and who whispered hoarsely, her finger up to her lips, behind Mrs. Aston's back—

"Miss Marjorie, will you come out at once?"

At the hall door stood Mr. Blayke, the master, nearly as white under his weather-tan as Elizabeth, and behind him, slowly down the little garden, came men, bearing between them a hurdle, and on the hurdle lay something in red, and Mr. Blayke was saying, in a voice which sounded miles off to Marjorie's swimming brain—

"The ox-fence in the Home pasture—a bad fall—brought him here—could not let him lie and die out yonder."

* * * *

But Hubert Erle did not die. It was one of those horrible accidents which would have killed ninety-nine men out of a hundred—a rotten fence, a raw, hot young horse, which fell with him, kicked him in the face, and then rolled over on him. For weeks Hubert Erle lay between life and death at Studley Grange—a broken thigh, a smashed face, and concussion of the brain. A week elapsed—a blank week. He remembered nothing between putting his horse at that fatal fence till he heard Marjorie's voice as she bent over him.

Lady Edward had rushed down to her brother, but they were glad when the worst danger was over, and the baby in London, busy cutting a back tooth, recalled her, for she was very unfit for a sick-room.

Nurse Merton was jealous of the hospital nurse, with whom she wrangled from morning till night over "her boy" till he could not bear her near him. Marjorie's gentle tones were the only things which never jarred upon the sick man; for her voice was everything to him—Hubert was practically blind. Helpless, strapped from hip to heel in hard splints, weak from suffering and fever, Hubert Erle lay in darkness.

Never perhaps before had he so appreciated Marjorie's soft *timbre* of tone as she talked or read to him as he was able to bear it, patiently, unwearyingly, her voice always soothing, though her dark eyes were often dim with tears as she looked at him. It was weeks ere Hubert could move himself or leave his bed, and then the liberty of crutches seemed a hollow mockery, for the physicians said they would not answer for the eyes unless they were kept in the dark. So it came to pass that Hubert was utterly dependent on Marjorie for help and guidance, even when, at last, he began to hobble on a stick to the parlour or the porch.

It was terrible work for a man so young, strong, and active. Naturally there were times of deep depression.

"It would have almost been better, perhaps, if the mare had kicked a little harder, and done for me outright!" he would grumble.

"Hubert!" rebuked Marjorie, gently, and she laid her hand on his; a trick she had got into when he was worse, and one which always quieted him.

"Well, anyhow, less bother for you," he replied. But, with a little smile, "Oh, Marjorie!" he added, feeling for the hand which had been removed, "I

don't suppose I shall ever quite realise how much I owe you."

They were sitting in the porch. Sir Hubert had suggested at intervals that he should no longer be a burden upon Mrs. Aston. No one, however, paid the slightest heed to this suggestion.

"As if you were fit to be sent up to grope in the dark about that half-empty big house, Master Hubert!" growled Nurse Merton.

"And then it would be more trouble in the end for me," put in Marjorie, "unless you are tired of my reading?"

To which he would demur with a smile that meant more than his words, and she would read on, and somehow this reading and talking over it opened out so many subjects in common that they seemed to have grown nearer together than ever since the long-ago days of childhood.

They were sitting in the porch, for the summer had come. The pastures by the river were emerald green with standing grass. The notes of the cuckoo came cooing across from the Home Wood, and the little garden of the Grange was fragrant with sweet old-fashioned flowers. Sir Hubert, the bandage across his eyes and his dark hair, his face still thin and white, leant against the old oak door-post languidly, and stifled a yawn.

Marjorie, ever watchful, noticed it.

"You want your tea. It will soon be here now. Shall I read you Irene's last letter, all about her parties, and Lord Edward's speech?"

"It makes me tired to think of it, this June weather—spending the night in hot rooms and in the hotter house. How nice and fresh the world smells down here!"

"And really the grass looks nearly ready for mowing. Don't you think so?"

"How should I know, Marjorie?"

"Ah! I forgot. I was thoughtless, Hubert—forgive me," she added, blushing.

"You don't often forget, Marjorie. You forget about other people less than anyone I ever knew;" and he felt about for her hand again.

But she got up from the bench and went and stood in the doorway.

"By the bye," he continued, "what is this I hear about Adams? He tells me he's leaving. Did you know it?"

"Yes," she replied, in a low voice.

"I'm quite surprised. Do you know why?"

A little hesitation, and a voice that shook a little as she answered "Yes."

He now was silent a minute.

"Won't—won't you tell me, Marjorie?"

A pause.

"I'd—rather not."

He gave a little low laugh.

"Oh, Marjorie! Marjorie! your voice tells tales. Do you not think after all these months I can't distinguish all its little inflexions? Marjorie, where are you off to?"

"Going to see why tea doesn't come," she replied, and vanished.

Sir Hubert lay back and smiled all to himself.

Lady Edward ran down again to see how her brother was getting on, and cheered him not a little; and in the evening, while Marjorie was gone to church, the brother and sister sat long alone together in the bay window, as the June twilight closed in, and the silence of a country Sunday lay over the land. Irene had much to say to her brother. She had come on purpose to say it.

Mr. Adams saw Marjorie home after the service, down the lane and as far as the stile. And then and there Mr. Adams, after months of patient waiting, "came again"; but he came too late.

Lady Edward, strolling up in the twilight to meet Marjorie, saw him vanish in the gloom, and found her standing alone by the stile, her eyes full of tears. Irene threw her arms round her neck and kissed her.

"Marjorie," she said, "I have come to look for you. Hubert wants you."

He had "wanted her" so often during the last few months that Marjorie, obeying mechanically, fell in the trap the two had laid for her.

Sir Hubert had groped his way into the porch, where it was very dark now.

"Marjorie!" he cried, as she came up the path, "will you see to my bandage?"

It required no attention at that moment, but when he found both her hands on his head he reached up, secured them firmly, and drew her down beside him.

"I've got you now, Marjorie!" he cried, with a little laugh. "You shan't escape me this time. Tell me, tell me true, why is Adams leaving this?"

"Because—because——"

"*You* sent him away—eh, Marjorie?"

"P-perhaps," in a quivering voice.

"He asked you to go with him?"

A mere nod.

"And you would rather stay at Cerne, Marjie, *with me*—with a half-blind, battered fellow like me, Marjie? Marjie, you don't answer, my playfellow, my little child-wife of long ago. Marjie, what was it you wrote on poor old Smudge's grave—'Faithful and true.'"

A little sob was all the answer. But he raised himself and bent over her.

"Listen, Marjie. I see it all now. Even through that dream-love for that poor child, as far above me as an angel, through my wild, purblind passion for that woman, all through, all along, I have been 'faithful and true' to you, Marjie, down in the bottom of my heart; and you know it now, you know it now! Kiss me, Marjie, Marjie, 'faithful and true.'"

THE END

HOW A WILDERNESS BECAME A GARDEN.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

THE STOCKING OF A SUBURBAN GARDEN.

FAIR MAID OF GUERNSEY.

THOUGH the year was declining, and the days were growing shorter, it cannot be said that as yet there was any corresponding decline in the amicable horticultural rivalry between our two enthusiastic gardeners.

And this perhaps is the less to be wondered at, seeing that November is nearly the last month in which it may be said that the *general* stocking of a garden can go on. For in the month of December we begin to look for prolonged frost, and when it comes garden stocking and gardening changes of most kinds must cease.

As yet, however, there had been in this month of November an occasional day of unnatural summer, warm enough indeed one morning to allow John and Alice Smith to spend a few minutes of lingering admiration at their chrysanthemums, which were in several places now in full bloom.

"Dear me, Mr. Robinson, how you startled me!" suddenly exclaimed Alice Smith, as a round and good-natured face was detected by her gazing over the wall and evidently sharing with satisfaction the pride which Alice and her husband were then taking in their autumnal show.

"I was going to say, Mrs. Smith," replied Charles Robinson, after the morning greetings, and the laughter which the surprise had caused had subsided, "would you and your husband step round and see *my* chrysanthemums, not but what I greatly admire those over there that I see so much please you."

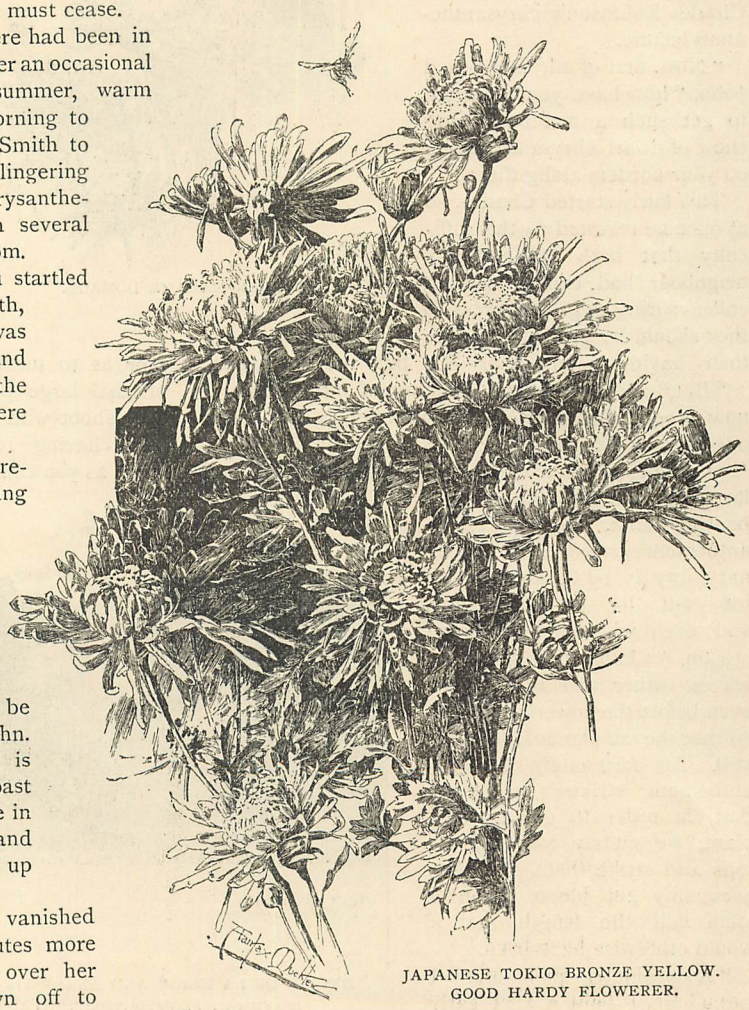
"Very sorry, Charles, but I must be off in less than ten minutes," replied John.

"Oh well then, let me see, this is Saturday and you will be back by half-past two, won't you?" asked Charles. "Come in then, when you are more at leisure, and we can have a garden debate, winding up afterwards with a cup of tea."

This was agreed upon, the head vanished behind the wall, and in a few minutes more Alice Smith was wandering alone over her garden and her husband had flown off to business. Turning round, however, shortly afterwards, she saw coming towards her the bright and pretty face of her neighbour Mary, the niece of Charles Robinson.

"Isn't it too bad, Mrs. Smith; uncle is so particular about me, he will hardly ever let me work with him in the garden, because I am not to tire myself, so I have made up my mind this morning for a little rebellion and want you to let me help you in your dear bit of a greenhouse. I *do* believe your garden will one day be gayer than ours, and then perhaps uncle will get jealous and take me on as under-gardener, and I shall get my way."

"But, my dear, what will Mr. Robinson say if he comes home and finds that I have been wearing his pet out," said Alice, kissing affectionately her pretty neighbour; "but come, we can pick off these few dead leaves anyhow, for our store of greenhouse plants is not so great as yours."



JAPANESE TOKIO BRONZE YELLOW. GOOD HARDY FLOWERER.

So Mary was detained all the morning, though not fatigued, and quite a merry one o'clock luncheon the two girls had together, so that all too soon half-past two came, the appointed hour next door for Charles Robinson's chrysanthemum lecture.

"Now, first of all," interposed John, "how have you managed to get such a healthy-looking show of dwarf chrysanthemums on your borders along there?"

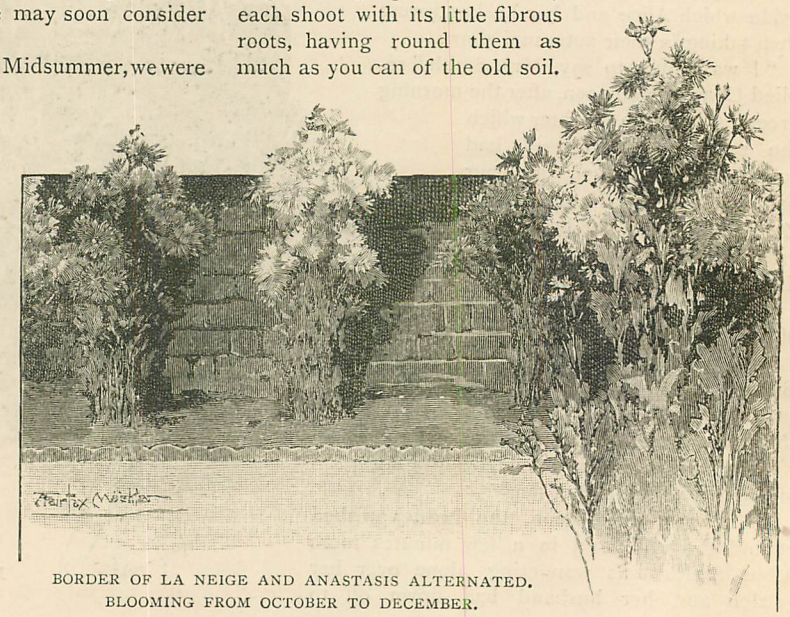
This fairly started Charles, so at once he reverted to the difficulty that both he and his neighbour had experienced in endeavouring to grow flowers as they should be grown, owing to their having been, after all, but recent comers.

"But," added he, "the stocking of our gardens is now progressing so well that we may soon consider ourselves as established.

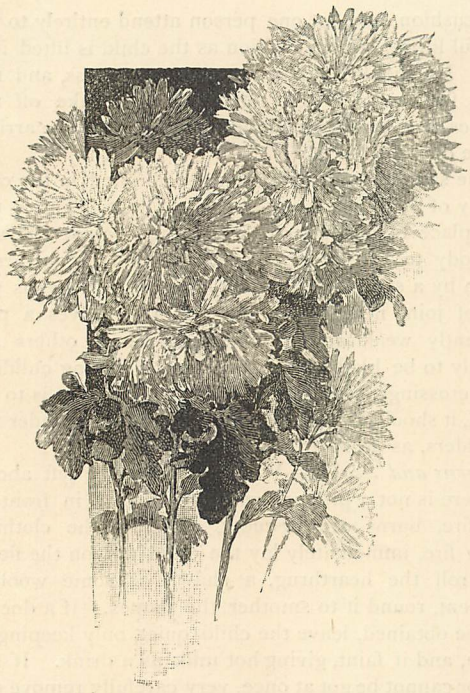
"Coming, however, as we did, at Midsummer, we were largely dependent upon a neighbouring florist. Now the chrysanthemum grown in the ordinary way is by its very nature too tall to be handsome, and even when it is a good season, we know that the lower leaves wither and turn brown even before the flowering period, so that the tall plants look uglier still. But fortunately the chrysanthemum strikes so easily that, in order to get a dwarf plant, we merely take off the tops and strike them, and thus eventually get bloom upon a stem half the length that it would otherwise have been.

"Accordingly, soon after I came here, I paid a visit early in July to Jenkins the florist, who had got for me the tops of some strong shoots, some three inches or so in length. From these the lower leaves were cut off and thus about three-quarters of an inch of bare stem was left. Then two or three large pots were prepared, plenty of crocks—broken pieces of tile, you know, Mrs. Smith—were put at the bottom for drainage, and the soil was made up of half loam, and the other half of turfy peat rubbed through a garden sieve with an equal part of decayed cow-dung, having on the top of the soil nearly an inch of silver sand. Next, gently moisten the whole. Then put in your cuttings, so that the bottom just touches the *soil* through the sand, and a very gentle watering will settle the sand close to the stems. A bell glass should then be put on, and the large pots put away in some gentle hot-bed or propagating-house. Now the sand should always be kept moist and the glasses kept wiped, and you will notice that in a very few days your young cuttings will have struck and commenced their growth. When they have thoroughly established themselves they can then be potted off in, say, 'forty-eight' size pots. As before, put plenty of crocks in, so as to make sure they are well drained. And you do not now wish to excite growth, for from this point the slower your plant grows the stronger it will be. The soil in your new pots need be but loam from decayed turf. And now as to turning out your young shoots from the original large pot. Get away each shoot with its little fibrous roots, having round them as much as you can of the old soil.

GOLDEN MADAME DOMAGÉ.



BORDER OF LA NEIGE AND ANASTASIS ALTERNATED. BLOOMING FROM OCTOBER TO DECEMBER.



LA VIÈRGE—BEST PURE WHITE DWARF KNOWN.

When putting each shoot into its new pot, hold it carefully and gently in the centre, so that the soil comes quite as high as the sand did originally. Press—but not too hard—the soil all round the root. Your young plants can then be watered and placed in a frame, though not exposed to a hot sun, or the plants would droop and perhaps fail. In a few days they must have plenty of air, and when the temporary check to growth which all transplanting occasions has passed away, the plants can be removed and placed out along or on any hard substance, for the roots might otherwise strike through the hole at the bottom of the pot into the soil on which the pots are, and this would never do. Lastly, you will find that in a short time the pots will be filled with roots, and that means that each plant may be turned out, as you see mine now are, into the borders where they will bloom—and indeed where ours are *now* blooming ("And *ours too*," suddenly interposed Mrs. Alice Smith) in their dwarf state."

"Bravo, Mr. Charles!" put in John; "but are you sure that all this is *necessary*, Charles, for bloom?"

"Undoubtedly *not*, John; but, as I think I said at the outset, that terribly lanky and untidy look which chrysanthemums naturally have is by this process avoided, and you will have flowers at less than half the height they would have attained, nor will your plants have lost their foliage or their colour. And what is more, John, these very plants which we are now looking at would next year be as tall as any other if we allowed them to remain on untended for another season."

John again, for his part, thought it best to hold forth upon the beauties of the tall chrysanthemum and of the shrubby specimens also. "No one can deny," said Charles in reply, "the beauties of these; but for our smaller garden, perhaps the dwarf specimens are best adapted."

NURSERY ACCIDENTS.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.

"ACCIDENTS will happen," even in the best regulated households, and there is no part of the house where they happen oftener or cause more anxiety than in the nursery. Everybody who has anything to do with children should possess the knowledge of how best to manage when any accident has occurred. One or other of the children is always "in the wars," and a great deal can be done to help the little sufferer at the time, and—what is often more important—very much to ward off the evil after-effects which sometimes follow apparently trivial injuries, by anyone who possesses an intelligent idea of "first aid" in such accidents.

Many of the accidents which happen to children could be prevented by forethought and care on the part of those who have charge of them. We must remember that young children do not know the difference between anything they may play with in safety and the most dangerous things. At first they will attempt to play with the fire or a can of boiling water just as readily as with their rattle, and it is only after the first accident with each dangerous plaything that they begin to exercise caution. "Once bitten, twice shy" is a very true adage, but "Experience is a dear school" is just as true, and it is very cruel for us to allow our children to find out dangers by experience.

"Prevention is better than cure," and the best way of managing accidents in the nursery is to prevent them. Everything which by any chance could be dangerous should be kept well out of the children's reach. Never leave bottles or crockery lying about on the tables, as if they are knocked off or in any way broken, the pieces may cause dangerous and even fatal injuries. All medicines should be put carefully away. Matches, knives, scissors, hammers, and tools of all

kinds should be kept on a high shelf in the cupboard, and never be given into the hands of children. Many toys are dangerous either from hard sharp corners or from their being heavy and large; the large rocking-horses, swings, etc., although good for older children, are dangerous to the younger ones, and they should not be used unless an adult is present to keep the younger children out of danger. Mothers should be very particular in looking after servants, to see that they do not leave anything poisonous within reach, such as furniture polish, turpentine, disinfectants, etc. Begin early, and train the children to keep away from the fire. Never allow them to play with, or poke the fire, and always have a fire-guard tall enough to prevent them from reaching over. Train them to be obedient, as often, when danger threatens, if a command is given and they obey, the danger may be averted, and much anxiety and pain prevented. It is very important that proper attention should be given at the time to all cases of accident, as very frequently on tracing back serious or fatal illnesses we come upon a fall or some other preventible cause, and the grief at the result is harder to bear when we think that the bad consequences might have been prevented had more care been exercised.

Still, when all precautions have been taken, accidents will occasionally happen, and every mother should be able to render intelligent "first aid" to her children.

In many cases first aid consists in just preventing things from going worse, and in judicious letting things alone until the doctor can be summoned. Much harm has been done after broken limbs, beads in the ear and nose, and other cases, by well-meant but mistaken attempts to remedy matters. In other cases, as choking, clothes on fire, etc., first aid is the most important of all treatment. We will just consider some of the more common nursery accidents, and see how we can best treat them at the time of occurrence. It will be better to take them in alphabetical order, as reference to them in an emergency will be greatly facilitated by such an arrangement.

Bites.—Sometimes while playing with a dog or cat the children get bitten. Very often the teeth do not go through the skin, and the fright is the worse thing in such cases. When the teeth do go through the skin, you should immediately apply a hot bread poultice, and renew this when cold.

Broken Limbs.—These occur as the result of falls off a table or chair or down the stairs. The first thing to do is to send for the doctor. Do not lift the child from the floor at once, as very often, when the bone is broken, lifting the child allows the limb to hang, and the sharp broken end of the bone may tear a hole in the skin, or even damage the blood-vessels, which are very near to the bones, and either of these complications makes the injury much more serious. Before moving the child, you must place the injured limb in such a position that no further harm can be done. If the leg is damaged, gently tie it to the other leg with soft handkerchiefs above and below the place where it is broken. If the arm is broken, place it tenderly on a soft cushion, and let one person attend entirely to the careful lifting of this cushion as the child is lifted into bed. He should be placed upon a mattress, and not on a feather bed. Do not attempt to take off the clothes, but leave everything as it is until the arrival of the doctor.

The same treatment should be adopted in the case of any of the bones being put out of joint. This is the best place to give a serious warning against allowing anybody to lift, swing, or jerk a child by its arms. Often by a sudden jerk or lift, one of the bones is put out of joint near the elbow, and this leaves a permanently weak arm. Nursemaids and others are greatly to be blamed for the habit of jerking children over crossings or puddles. Whenever a child is to be lifted, it should be caught round the waist or under the shoulders, as no harm can be done in this way.

Burns and Scalds.—Where matches are left about, or there is not a proper fire-guard always in front of the fire, burns are frequent. Should the clothing catch fire, immediately lay the child flat on the floor, and roll the hearthrug, a shawl, or some woollen garment, round it to smother the flames. If a doctor can be obtained, leave the child quiet, only keeping it warm, and if faint, giving hot milk as a drink. If the doctor cannot be got at once, very carefully remove the clothing, cutting any part which tends to stick to the skin, and leaving it where it sticks. Do not break any blisters, but cover the whole surface with strips of linen soaked in oil, or, where oil cannot be obtained, dredge flour thickly over, and then cover with cotton-wool.

Scalds result when the child upsets a cup of hot tea or a kettle, etc., over itself. They are treated in the same way as burns. All cases of burns and scalds are serious, and should be seen by a doctor as soon as possible.

Cuts.—When the child gets a cut with a knife or any sharp object, such as glass, or from a fall, wash the cut well with warm water, to remove any dirt which may have got in, and then put a piece of clean soft linen round the part, and fasten it on by winding cotton round it, or by means of a handkerchief or bandage. Should there be much bleeding, or the wound be large, you should send for the doctor, as a stitch may be required to prevent a very ugly mark, which would be left if the cut were allowed to gape open.

Falls.—Children are constantly tumbling, and generally their falls are not very severe. Should they have a bad fall on to the head or back, this should be carefully attended to, and an examination made by a doctor, as serious consequences often develop some time afterwards. Some children have become cripples from falls down the stairs, or from their nurses' arms on to their backs. If the child is stunned, lay him flat and keep him quiet. Loosen the clothing, and give him fresh air, but do not attempt to rouse him, and let him be seen by a doctor as soon as possible. Even slight falls should be prevented whenever possible. There should be a gate at the top of the stairs, provided with swing hinges, so that it is

always kept shut and fastened. Young children should not be allowed to climb into chairs or on to the table, etc., as many nasty tumbles may result.

Substances in the Eye, Ear, and Nose.—Children very often put such things as peas, beads, or cherry-stones into their noses or ears. If they have only just put the substance inside the nose or ear, it is easy to remove it, but should it be pushed tightly in, there is always a good deal of difficulty in getting it out, and it is very unwise to attempt it, as specially-shaped instruments may be necessary, and even chloroform may have to be administered. Every unsuccessful attempt pushes the substance further in and increases the risk and trouble in finally removing it. When anything gets into the ear, turn the head on one side, with that ear undermost, and if a few gentle taps on the head do not dislodge the body, do not make any further efforts, but take the child to a doctor.

When anything gets into the eye, gentle efforts to remove it may be made by using the end of a tightly-rolled paper spill, which has been softened by chewing. Hold the lower eyelid down, and carefully remove any dust, etc., then bathe the eye with warm milk and water.

Peas, beads, etc., in the nose are difficult to remove, and if they cannot be expelled by an attempt at sneezing, or by putting your mouth over the child's mouth and blowing sharply, you should seek medical assistance.

Swallowing Coins, Buttons, etc.—If any substance sticks in the child's throat, and it threatens to choke, try to pull it up with your fingers, passing them as far down as possible, and hooking the substance up. If this is impossible, make the child swallow coarsely-chewed bread to try and send it down. Do not give emetics or aperients.

Sufficient has now been said to show how a little intelligent first aid is often of great use in preventing serious consequences following the little mishaps which are likely to occur in the nursery.

BIRD DWELLERS BY THE SEA.

BY F. A. FULCHER.

THE OYSTER-CATCHER'S dwelling-place is paved with gold. Yellow sands stretch far and wide where these quaint birds make their abode, gleaming pale gold under a wintry sky, burning red gold in the fierce heat of summer, gold alloyed to shifting shades of changeful yellow, lemon, maize, orange, as cloud and wind and weather work it. Summer is the time to see the pale sands to perfection. Wild rock borders find their fullest expression in winter, when a seething sea boils over and floods the boulder-strewn beach and the cliffs bow beneath the weight of scudding storm clouds as they sweep over the brow of the hill. Storm winds howling as they climb the ramparts, storm waves booming as they cannonade the fortress, they but whisper the tale of the mighty convulsions and explosions and upheavals that have written the story of the spot, but they tell nevertheless of the rock sorrows and rock conflicts whose scars and whose triumphs are here. It is then that rock beaches tell out their sermons.

But summer is the time to see sands. They creep out from under the blue waters where the mills of God are grinding slowly fresh grains to replenish their store, and spread upwards towards high-water mark where they may take courage and bring forth the beautiful blooms of sea-poppy, golden like themselves, and tufts of sea-holly, blue in memory of the waters behind. Onward go the drifting sands where they travel high and dry led on by the tiny blades of marram, that wonderful land-winner—working in its quiet way and reclaiming vast tracts of salt sands to add to the rich pastures of inlands. Fields of sea-lavender often wave purple triumph where the sea sand-grass has won a victory and a patch of barren sand has been converted and has become a fruitful field. The sunlight falls softly on the sands when their flowers are blooming, each tiny particle reflects it, and a brilliant shimmer of light plays on their wide surface, the gentle ripples of clear waters wash them softly to and fro in waving ridges—a soft haze from the deep blue beyond sails in upon the wandering breeze and veils, but scarcely dims, the brightness of the glowing flowers and the smooth yellow sands that were else too gay in the summer garden of a sandy shore.

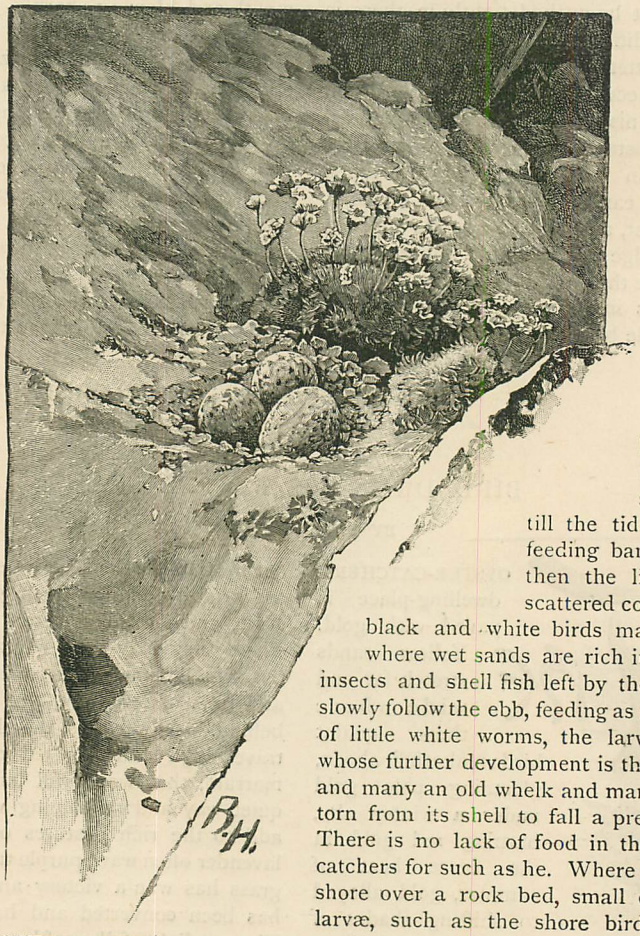
The oyster-catchers have the wit to appreciate this phase of the varied charms of their abode, and when the dunlin, and the sanderlings, the godwits, and turnstones, grey plovers, and hooded crows, who have spent the winter with them on the sea sands, fly away to the moors and fells far north, they remain and in company with the little-ringed plovers and the sand-martins have the best of sand seasons to themselves as far as birds are concerned.

The birds on such strands by the sea in winter are

legion. These are the favourite sanctuaries of the bird refugees from the north. A large proportion of those myriads from the Arctic regions which pass in dense clouds across the island of Heligoland on their way south are the shore-loving birds whose haunts, whether at home or abroad, are on the margin of wave-washed shores, and many more that in summer frequent the hill countries inland, spend the winter at the seaside.

Some of our native birds, mostly those belonging to the large family of plovers, come down from their inland rivers and marshes and lakes and moors, and join the foreign visitors at the sea sands. The beautiful redshanks and the little dotterel with all the many grades that lie between in plover type, may be seen here when fields and ponds lie frost-bound.

In summer the bird life is not so varied, except for the vagrant sand-martins who arrive just in time to tunnel out nests in the sand banks and stay only to rear their young; the birds on sand beaches in summer are just those which are there all the year round.



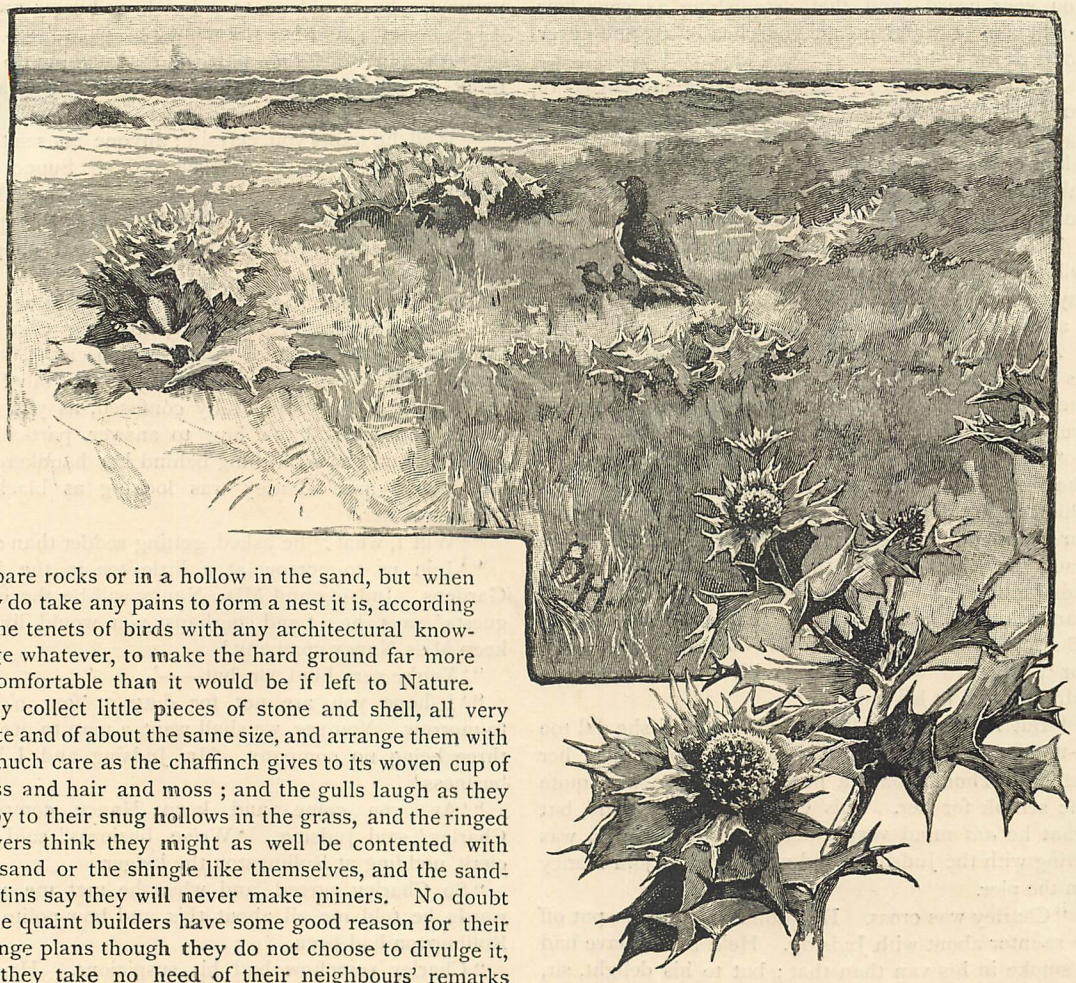
OYSTER-CATCHER'S NEST, SCILLY ISLANDS.

The sands receive no other home-comers than the *papillons de montagne* when the emigrants return in the spring and the wayside fields and hedge-rows are made musical with their song, neither do the sea birds, the true seafowl which throng isolated rocks and desolate cliffs in spring, come here. Only the sand's own tribes—the oyster-catchers, the ringed plovers, and the little mining martins—have their home here. For a bird's true home is where its nest is, that is where its heart bides—the little heart that beats so fast, even when wandering instincts carry the frail creature far over land and sea, and the winter migrants though they be here half the year, are but aliens after all. Near by, the gulls may be building in a colony in a grassy meadow or marsh, and they sail over the yellow sands or settle like foam flakes at low tide, but they are too cosmopolitan to be identified with any one spot; here, there, and everywhere, wherever land and sea shake hands in the dark like wreckers, there go the gentle gulls to succour them "that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters."

Not so the oyster-catchers. Should you meet one astray on a pebbly beach, he is a mere nobody, even where some go to the rocks to breed they are but temporary visitors, but we must speak of a bird as we find him, and on the golden sands by the sea, where the oyster-catchers dwell in flocks of a hundred strong, they are lords of the manor, and their odd habits and striking plumage are conspicuous features of interest. You may see them there in long line, close-ranged like well-drilled soldiers standing at attention, till the tide goes down and the feeding banks are nearly visible; then the line is broken and in scattered companies the handsome black and white birds march leisurely down to where wet sands are rich in a harvest of marine insects and shell fish left by the receding tide. They slowly follow the ebb, feeding as they go upon hundreds of little white worms, the larvæ of winged insects whose further development is then and there arrested, and many an old whelk and many a clinging limpet is torn from its shell to fall a prey to the hungry birds. There is no lack of food in the home of the oyster-catchers for such as he. Where the sea flows in to the shore over a rock bed, small creatures, insects and larvæ, such as the shore birds seek for food, are scarce.

Oyster-catchers are not insatiable like the voracious hooded crows which come down from Norway in the winter to share their store. As to eating oysters they are quite innocent, for whatever their taste in the matter may be, oysters live far too deep under water to be caught by any of the birds of this family, even though like these they have learned to swim. Long before the tide begins to turn, the oyster-catchers have finished their meal and fly up the beach again, rarely re-turning, as they go, in marching order, sometimes calling aloud their noisy clamorous note while they circle in short flights before alighting. Now and then the birds feed on the upper shore, and vary their diet with tender buds and roots of plants, blades of grass, and juicy leaves of vetch and other small plants.

The oyster-catchers take immense pains to produce what seems to us most uncomfortable and inconvenient homes. Not always, for often they, too, lay their eggs



"SEA-HOLLY, BLUE IN MEMORY OF THE WATERS BEHIND."

on bare rocks or in a hollow in the sand, but when they do take any pains to form a nest it is, according to the tenets of birds with any architectural knowledge whatever, to make the hard ground far more uncomfortable than it would be if left to Nature. They collect little pieces of stone and shell, all very white and of about the same size, and arrange them with as much care as the chaffinch gives to its woven cup of grass and hair and moss; and the gulls laugh as they go by to their snug hollows in the grass, and the ringed plovers think they might as well be contented with the sand or the shingle like themselves, and the sand-martins say they will never make miners. No doubt these quaint builders have some good reason for their strange plans though they do not choose to divulge it, for they take no heed of their neighbours' remarks but go on building grottoes.

Not the least of the summer charms of a sandy shore is the presence of these birds. Early in summer their ways are most interesting as they wander along the shore in small groups with their tiny young ones following after, and later, when the chickens have grown up, large flocks roam far and wide pursuing their most characteristic daily routine. And in winter when the flowers have gone away and the martins flown after them, when the sands are dull and dreary and the sea has lost its glamour, the still expanse of silent sands is cheered by the lively birds who are always there on the golden strand, the birds who go by the trivial name of oyster-catchers.

CHARLEY DOWN'S ORDEAL: A RAILWAY ROMANCE.

BY HENRY FRITH.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

A FAITHFUL GUARD.

"I THINK, sir," remarked Wrightson one afternoon as we were sauntering by the sluggish stream, "that I mentioned to you a guard, Charley Down, who was on our line."

"Yes, you told me he was one of the guards of the tidal train, I think. He was mixed up in that accident in which Fireman Deane's intended bride was mortally injured."

"Just so: well, yon's his cottage; and if you and me could persuade him, over a pipe, to tell you his 'sexperience' of the van, he'd just astonish you."

"Well, let us go and see him—you know him well, I suppose?"

"Ay, well enough; but he's a quiet chap is Charley.

Still his story of the robbery of the gold is as good as you ever heard—and that astonishing as your hair might a'most stand up on your head : ay, and never come down agin."

At this suggestion I paused, not being so desirous to go through the world with such a brush as the worthy gatekeeper indicated, and I was not altogether sorry when on making inquiry of Mrs. Down, a handsome, middle-aged woman, we found that her husband was out with her father—a very old man.

The manner of the woman, and her evident unwillingness to afford me any information, stimulated my curiosity, and as, baffled, we returned homewards I asked my companion to tell me Charley's tale.

After supper, old Wrightson joined me in the porch as usual ; and as the soft autumnal breeze fanned our faces and wafted the smoke through the eastward trellises, related the promised story as follows :—

"It was just this way, sir : Charley Down was on the Continental traffic, and had, of course, a nice berth. One evening down on Popplestone Pier when waiting for the steamboat, Charley met old Judsing and his daughter. Judsing was the parcels' clerk at the seaside terminus, and his daughter Nancy was a fine, handsome slip of a girl. You may depend on it that Charley joined the clerk and his daughter on the pier, for the guard was smitten a bit with Nancy, who admired him in his uniform.

"But much as she liked Charley—and she did too—no doubt about that, sir—she just worshipped her father! Though only a parcels' clerk he was quite the seraph for her. This Charley did not mind, but what he *did* mind very much was a lodger who was living with the Judsings, and who came to join Nancy on the pier.

"Charley was cross. He didn't want to be put off to saunter about with Judsing. He'd rather have had a smoke in his van than that ; but to his delight, sir, the lodger, a smart-looking gentleman from London, left Nancy and tackled on to her father.

"Charley dropped back at once to join the young woman, and said, nodding at the lodger :

"'Who's your friend, Miss Nancy?'

"'My friend! He isn't no particular friend o' mine. He's our lodger ; a very agreeable man and kind to father ; *very* kind to father he is.'

"'So you like him?'

"'Oh, I don't know; he isn't bad, but he's very busy. Has plenty of money, I should say.'

"'Has plenty of brass, *I* should say,' replied Charley Down. 'I don't think much of him! What wants a rich gentleman from London lodging in your father's house!'

"'I suppose our house isn't respectable then ; thank you, Mister Down, for the compliment. Anyway, there's some people's company not pleasant out o' doors, let alone in the house!'

"'You are misunderstanding on purpose,' replied Charley. 'I never said anything against the house. I said I wondered at a rich man *and* a gentleman living there.'

"'And why, Mister Down, if you please?'

"'Because, unless he wanted something very particular, he would go to a hotel, or bigger rooms, if he's honest ; and has the money—I mean.'

"'Ah, and what very particular something do you think *he* wants, eh?' said she, looking at Charley boldly.

"'Well, he wants you, certain ; anyone can see that.'

"'Can they! You *are* clever to-day. Suppose he does then?'

"'I'll smash his head before he succeeds,' replied Charley, angrily. 'A stuck-up, conceited chap to come here——'

"'Perhaps your friend the guard will join us,' said the lodger, turning round, and stopping Charley's torrent of abuse with a smile, which, as Charley himself said, would calm the sea, it was that oily!

"The guard was dreadfully confused, as you may think ; and didn't know how to answer, particularly as Miss Nancy was laughing behind her handkerchief like mad ; and Charley was looking as black as thunder at her.

"'Will I, what?' he asked, getting redder than ever.

"'Join us to-morrow at a little tea in the New Gardens. Judsing and Miss Nancy will be the other guests,' says he ; 'and perhaps you would like to keep Miss Nancy company.'

"'You're very kind, sir, but——'

"'I hope you are not for duty at four o'clock to-morrow. You see, we shall want a man to prevent three being no company. Mr. Judsing and I have business.'

"'Ay, you come, and keep Nance company, Charley,' said Judsing. 'We've business,' said the clerk, nodding at Rollingston the lodger.

"So Charley agreed, and when he met me afterwards, he told me all about this, and how polite Mr. Rollingston had been.

"Charley somehow had his suspicions. He and Nancy got friendly, and he was delighted to see that the gentleman paid no great attention to Miss Judsing, who really seemed to admire Charley. He perceived how friendly her father and the gentleman were becoming, so he spoke to Nancy one day.

"'I wonder why he does it, Nan,' said he.

"'Why who does what?' she asked, quiet like.

"'Why that gentleman keeps so much company with your father.'

"'Because he likes him, I suppose.'

"'Hardly that, Nan. It's natural for me to keep company with *you* because I like you—ay, love you, Nan, I do, I declare ; but that old man and that young one are "in" something together.'

"'Charley Down,' cried Nance, facing him angrily, 'you insinuate another word against my father, and you'll see no more of *me*.'

"'Why, bless your heart, my girl, I made no 'sinuations! 'Sinuations is wrong—maybe also wicked. But you may depend, if your father's a angel, Rollingston isn't. And you'll excuse me, but in this world, Miss Nance, you won't find many angels in railway parcels' offices.'

"'That will do, Charley Down! You may go out

of my sight. You said you love me, and you abuse my father. You are cruel and unkind. Go! be off! I *did* like you. And if you hadn't called father names——'

"'Me!' exclaimed Charley. 'I never did.'

"'You did. You said he wasn't an angel, or something.'

"'Me!' cried the guard again. 'Why, Nan——'

"'None of your Nans! Ha' done with your Nannyings, like a great bearded goat. You've insulted father, and you'd better leave the house.'

"Well, sir, Charley had a spirit, and it being also near train time, he thought he'd take the goat by the horns and settle it; so he got up and said—

"'Thank ye, miss; if I am a goat, it isn't a sheepish one that I am. Good-day to you. I'll keep my eye on those two,' said he.

"Nancy only tossed her head, and so Charley went down to the station, where in the parcels' office he saw Mr. Rollingston talking to a clerk. Judsing was with me checking parcels, and he called to him—

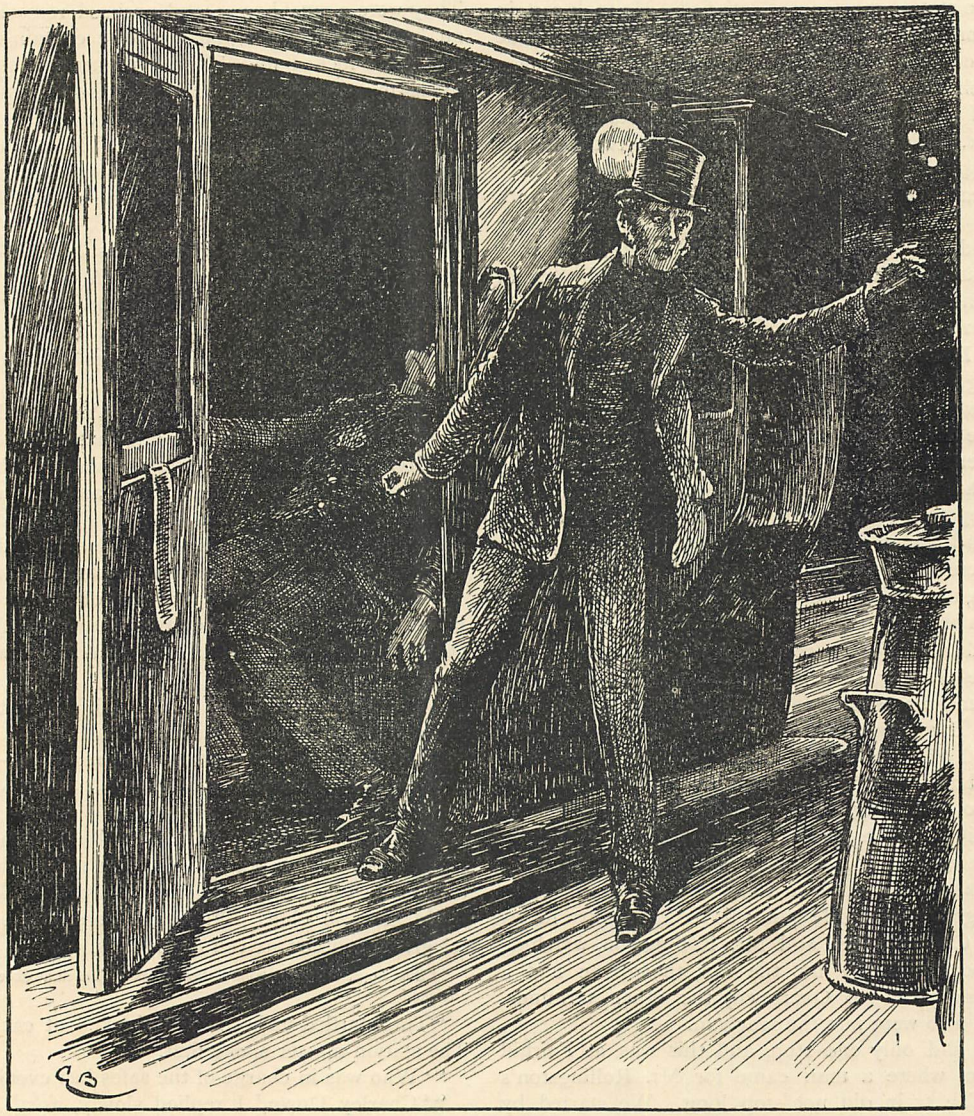
"'Here's something advised over for you, Charley. Boxes, empty—you know, gold boxes.'

"'All right!' said Charley, but said no more.

"Then I heard Rollingston ask—

"'Has the gold come down for me to-day, do you know?'

"Gold for him! What did he want with specie? Couldn't he draw as much as he pleased out of his



"I CALLED FOR ASSISTANCE" (*p.* 726).

bank without having a box sent him? So I whispered to Judsing—

"'Is this a real consignment?'

"'Yes, it's invoiced right enough. The station-master has it in the safe. Here he is.'

"'You are inquiring about a box, sir?'

"'Yes—sent to your care. Here's advice.'

"The station-master was satisfied. He took certain keys from a certain place on the shelf, opened the safe with one, and the box with another. The money was delivered in gold, and a receipt taken. The keys of the bullion box were replaced on the shelf, and Mr. Rollingston walked away with two hundred sovereigns.

"Charley told me after that about his trouble with Nance. Time passed. Mr. Rollingston was friendly still, and took Charley's part about Nance. Once or twice he travelled in the guard's van, and once or twice on the engine. He made himself agreeable to us all. In this way three months passed, and the autumn came. Business was heavy. Charley had plenty to do with luggage and with the special specie consignments which were continually being sent to the Continent by our line from London houses. There was always a fuss over these boxes, and I was on the duty of looking after them, receiving them from the carriers and weighing them, putting them into the train-van with the guard, and sometimes travelling with him.

"There were duplicates of the keys of the boxes in London, in Popplestone, in the steamers, and of course in Paris and over the sea. The boxes, as I said, were weighed in my charge, so I knew all was right.

"One evening, late in the autumn, I had a heavy batch, and the bullion was weighed as usual. Charley was on duty, and took the boxes, but I went and travelled with the other guard. All went well. We just had a little something together with Mr. Rollingston, who was hanging about with Judsing. He was responsible for the parcels, and the train started. Mr. Rollingston had a leather courier bag, and Judsing a black bag with him, which I supposed he was carrying for the gentleman. He put this bag, a pretty heavy one, in Charley's van, and Mr. Rollingston, watching his opportunity, got into the van, though he had a first-class ticket to Overtown, the other terminus. Judsing also went into the rear van.

"We had only one stop, and this was at Fairhill Junction, where a man came for Mr. Rollingston's bag. The train did not stop long. We started by signal from the guard I was travelling with, and of course we saw nothing of Charley Down; but Judsing got into a compartment there. We travelled on rapidly. The Continental travellers were deposited at Popplestone, and the front portion of the train went on, leaving the remainder at Popplestone, but Rollingston went on to Overtown.

"It was in my way to inspect the transfer of the bullion at Popplestone, so I went to the van to stir up Charley Down. The van was shut. I opened it, and the first object I saw was the guard, sitting dazed like, bleeding from a blow on the head, and evidently bewildered.

"I called for assistance. Old Judsing, who was on the platform, came running up.

"'Here's a wounded man!' I cried. 'He has been struck with the brake-handle, I suspect, and half stunned. Get him out. I will pass the bullion.'

"The three boxes, sealed and locked, were carried carefully down to the boat, and shipped for Paris. They were pretty heavy, and aroused remark. Once on board, they were placed in the captain's strong-room and locked up. Then I returned to shore, and made my way up to Judsing's house to inquire after Charley Down, for I was certain he would go there.

"'Charley Down has had a fall,' Miss Nancy said to me when I got to the house. 'How did it happen?'

"'I can't say. I should think he could tell if anyone can.'

"'He can't,' replied Judsing hastily, 'and no one can. He was all right when I left him at Fairhill Junction. Didn't *you* hear any alarm, Wrightson?'

"'No; I saw the van shut, and found Charley just coming round, but he couldn't tell me anything. Can't you account for it, Charley?'

"'No,' he said; 'but after all, I'm not altogether sorry I'm hurt—I am in such kind hands.'

"Here he looked at Nance, who blushed and laughed. Then she turned away, and I saw a look pass between Judsing and Charley. They had some secret about this—perhaps they had arranged matters between them. There was *some* understanding.

"I could get no news out of any of them, and went home. Next morning early a message from the station-master aroused me. I hurried down. He had been up some time.

"'Here's a pretty mess!' he cried. 'What do you make of this? Read this telegram.'

"I took the service message and read this—

"'Three bullion boxes, Boulogne; one four pounds over weight, others lighter than advised. Inquire.'

"I couldn't explain it. I had seen the boxes weighed, they were put into the safe in Charley's van, and taken out from it as the station-clerk knew. I could give no clue. While we were discussing the telegram, another arrived from Paris.

"'Boxes opened; gold gone: shot instead. Track at once. London advised.'

"This startled us both. We looked at each other. The station-master spoke first.

"'Who was in charge of the safes last evening?'

"'Charley Down,' I replied slowly, as all the circumstances came back to me.

"'Then the police will have a warrant out for him pretty quick. He is the man. He said he knocked his head, didn't he? Wonder whether that is a blind. I dare say he has bolted.'

"But Charley was not that kind of man. When the police went to Judsing's house, I was there, and was surprised to see how well Charley stood it—much better than Miss Nance, who stormed at the policemen.

"'You might as well suspect my father!' she cried; 'and everyone knows what he is! Father, don't you believe Charley is innocent?'

"'I do, my dear, I do. But he must go. Never mind, Nance, he will be proved innocent in court. They'll never commit him—they can't. When he's acquitted, Nance, we'll move out o' this, and you can both be married.'

"'Ah! Nance won't marry me if I am tried,' said Charley, looking at her sorrowfully over his shoulder as he was led away.

"'Yes I will,' she cried, 'if you're innocent. But if you're guilty, ay, if you were my own father, I'd send you to gaol and leave you there.'

"'You're wrong, Nance; don't be revengeful,' said Judsing. 'You wouldn't send me to gaol, lass.'

"'Well, never mind. But it's no use talking: you'd never be false, father, and Charley isn't. We'll move, perhaps, when you get your legacy.'

"This was the first I had heard of the legacy, and when poor Charley had been taken off by the police, I made inquiry.

"'Uncle Ben is dead beyond sea,' said Nance. 'He was a gold-digger, and has left us his money, so father needn't work any more. I'm a lady now, ain't I, father?'

"He made no answer. There was something in his face which alarmed me, and I felt sure that there was something behind the scenes."

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

THE MYSTERY OF THE BULLION ROBBERY.

"THE circumstances connected with the great bullion robbery were in everyone's mind and in everyone's mouth. The robbery had evidently been committed in England, for the weights at Boulogne and Paris tallied. Who had obtained the keys, or duplicates? who had taken the money, and what had become of it?

"These were questions which daily demanded replies, but to which no one replied satisfactorily. Charley Down had a great deal to put up with. He would say nothing but 'I am innocent!' His adviser could find no defence save that plea, but, on the other hand, the company had no evidence to condemn him. They tried to find Rollingston, but could not.

"I gave my evidence, just what I told you, and so did Judsing. He was greatly distressed at his position, for some whispers were going round concerning him; but when he went into the box, well-dressed, his frank face, grey hair, clear blue eyes, and honest manner of speaking, quickly impressed the court. He could not give any information of the robbery, but he would almost pledge his life upon Charley's innocence. Wasn't he going to let him marry his only child, a girl possessed of ample means now, in consequence of her uncle's death? People admired the good old man, and the young people met with much sympathy.

"On all sides search was made for Rollingston, but without success. I kept my eyes open, you may be sure, but he did not appear. In the meanwhile Charley Down was acquitted of the robbery, though not till after he had been sent for trial. There were some circumstances never explained at the sessions, and how Charley was hurt he never confessed directly.

"Fifteen thousand pounds had gone—no one knew where. A nice haul, sir, but no one could find the bars, of course. There was a big reward offered, too."

"How did the matter end?" I asked, as Wrightson made a longer pause than usual, after puffing at his pipe.

"In a very curious way, sir. Judsing and his daughter having come into the money moved away, but no one seemed to know their address. Poor Charley was committed for trial and lay in prison, and so far as I could make out, neither Nance nor her father ever went to see him. I did, and found him melancholy; he would say no more than that he was innocent; but I guessed he was keeping something back.

"Still the Judsings kept away; and even the police couldn't find them. One evening a remarkable thing occurred. It was a Sunday, I remember it well; I was just reading my paper in my room, when the girl came in, and said that a gentleman wanted to see me. 'Show him in,' said I, and in walked a rough-looking customer—bluff and quick.

"'A detective,' thinks I to myself. But I only said, "'you want me?'

"'Is your name Wrightson?' said he.

"I said it was, and asked him to sit down.

"'Can you tell me where Bob Judsing is—the man who was in the railway, and who has a daughter Nancy?'

"He came to the point direct, you see, in a business manner, and I replied as straight:

"'No, I cannot. What do you want with him, may I ask?'

"'You may; but maybe I won't tell you.'

"'Very well, then, I'll hold my tongue too; and you needn't wait here,' said I.

"'Then you *do* know where he is?'

"I said nothing, but just read the paper. He went on:

"'Come, let us be candid, man. Your name is Wrightson. Mine is Benjamin Judsing from Australia!'

"Down went the paper, and up jumped I.

"'Uncle Ben!' I cried, 'who left all the money! Not dead!'

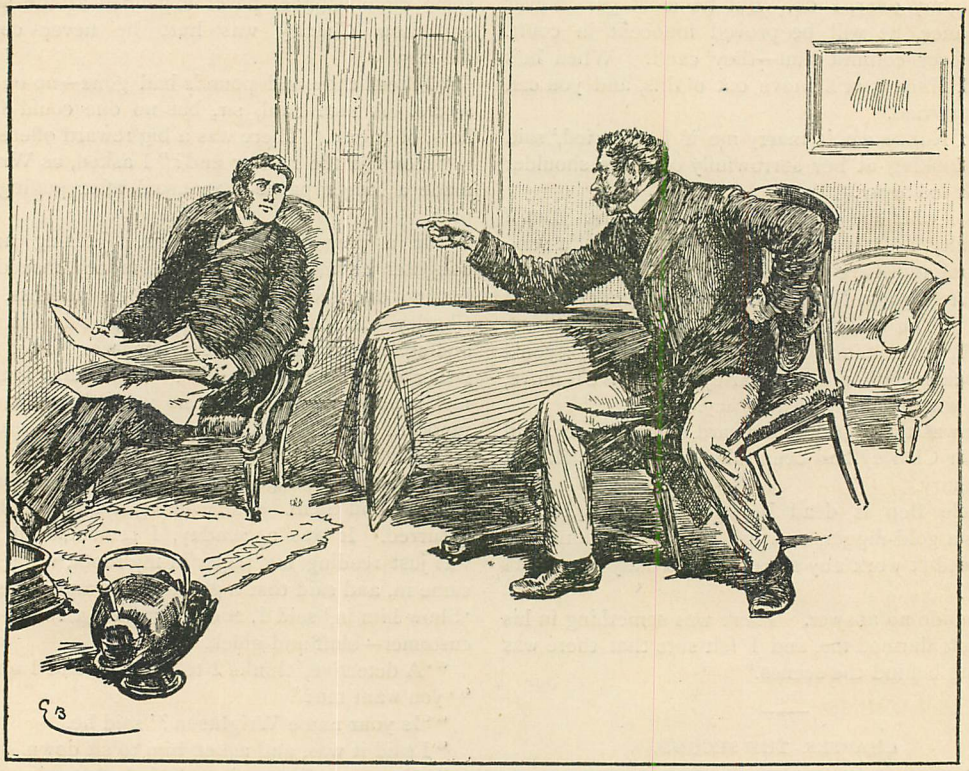
"'No, and don't intend to be neither. What do you mean by dead, and leaving money?'

"'Why your brother came into your fortune, became rich, and has taken himself and his daughter off somewhere to live in grand style!'

"'Rubbish!' said Uncle Ben. 'My brother never came into my fortune, for I haven't one. I lost nearly all my money speculating. If he's got a fortune it isn't through me! Where is he?'

"I was silent, sir, when he put this question sharply to me. I was thinking about the money. Where had Judsing got the fortune, and where had he gone to with it? Still Mr. Benjamin was waiting for an answer, but I couldn't satisfy him. At length I said:

"'The fact is, we don't know where he is. He



"'IS YOUR NAME WRIGHTSON?' SAID HE" (*p.* 727).

certainly gave out that he had come into your money. He *had* money.'

"'Well, I hope he came by it honestly. There's my address. If you hear of Bob, let me know, will you?'

"'Yes, certainly. Are you going now? Good-day, Mr. Benjamin.'

"As soon as he had gone I set to thinking, and putting pieces of the puzzle together. Next day the Grand Jury would decide in Charley's case, and if they found a true bill, there would be a search for Judsing; his evidence would be sifted, and the whole story would be told. I was sure as I could be that he and perhaps his daughter were 'in the swim' with Rollingston, and I felt bound to tell Charley, first opportunity.

"It came sooner than I expected. The jury threw out the bill against him. He had suffered enough on suspicion, and I met him. He came home with me, and after tea we got on the favourite topic—Nancy Judsing.

"'I suppose you know where she is?' I said.

"He nodded. 'With her father at Watchets.'

"'Oh! Do you know that "Uncle Ben" is in England?'

"'No!' exclaimed Charley. 'There will be another mess now; I must tell them. If he finds out——'

"'Now, Charley, be straight. You know that old Judsing is a humbug. He never inherited the money; he helped Rollingston and got part of the "swag."'

"Charley nodded but didn't speak.

"'And you knew this; went to prison; were nearly penal servituded; maybe killed in gaol, for such an old ruffian?'

"'No; not a bit,' said Charley. 'For his daughter. Nance worships him; I love her: she loves me. If I were to tell her that her father is a criminal, she would only hate *me*, and not desert *him!* No; I can't afford that!'

"'But surely, Charley, man, you're never going to lie still under this suspicion!'

"'I'll wait until I hear from Nance; but I'll never betray her father, for her sake!'

"Charley was a noble fellow, sir; he wrote to old Judsing in his feigned name at Watchets, and we waited the answer. He also wrote to Nancy. In two days the letters came in reply. What Nance's was I can't say. But old Judsing's was calm, mean impudence! He couldn't consent to have for a son-in-law a man who had been in gaol for stealing! In his position it wouldn't do; and therefore he had 'forbidden Nancy to think any more of Mr. Down'!

"This was a knock-down blow for poor Charley, who was not even comforted by Nance's letter of firmness and faith.

"'There's gratitude!' he cried. 'The mean beast! Well, you'll see he'll be laid by the heels yet!'

"'You won't tell *now?*' I asked in surprise.

"'No; I promised I wouldn't. The truth would kill Nance! I will wait; get some work and live it down.'

"Nothing could shake him. But I wasn't pledged, sir; and wouldn't see Charley put upon. So I just sent a line to 'Uncle Ben' at the address he had given, telling him his brother's new name and address; but I said nothing to Charley—poor fellow—who was seeking work again like a man.

"Three days passed. Charley and me were at our tea on the Friday afternoon, when who should come in but 'Uncle Ben.'

"'Good-evening,' he said. 'I've come to pay you what I owe you, Mister Wrightson.'

"'Owe me! You owe me nothing—I wish you did.'

"'Oh yes, I do,' he said. 'I'm a generous man. I've come into some money, and you go shares, proper. Here's fifty pounds to begin with, and another fifty in a while. Evening,' he added, nodding to Charley. 'You'll come down to my place to identify the men.'

"'What men?' I asked, fingering the money.

"'Why the prisoners; Rollingston and Judsing. Bullion robbery.'

"'Your brother arrested!' I cried, putting the notes in my waistcoat, dreamy-like.

"'My grandmother,' replied 'Uncle Ben.' 'My name is Watson, Scotland Yard detective. Had my eye on Judsing's moves but lost his traces. Got him now, and we managed to catch the other after a hint from him, too.'

"'And his daughter?' cried Charley.

"'She's all right. In "quod" on suspicion.'

"'She's innocent, I can prove that,' said the faithful guard.

"'You'll have the chance,' replied Watson. 'Just come along, she wants to see you both badly.'

"So my innocent way had been the means by which the men had been arrested! There was no charge against Nancy so she was released, and my landlady offered to look after her. The notes came handy.

"The fellows were caught. Judsing gave evidence, at last, against himself and his tempter, but it didn't do him much good. He got a mitigated penalty of imprisonment, but Rollingston had penal servitude. The way he carried out his robbery was magnificent—quite a romance in fact, nothing less."

"I should like to hear the circumstances," I said as Wrightson paused.

"The arrangements were splendidly made. There was, and is, a good deal of bullion carried on our line; but twenty years ago we took it by Popplestone tidal train at night. Of course Mr. Rollingston knew this, and tried on the robbery. They do say as a 'rolling stone gathers no moss;' but he made money and lined his nest anyway.

"The fellow was simply and solely a thief. He managed to find out all about old Judsing, wound himself into his confidence, and into the good graces of Nance; so by degrees he tempted the father. He used to hang around the clerk's office, and managed to discover where the keys of the boxes, and of the van-safes were kept. But Judsing refused to steal them. One time, however, Rollingston found out that a couple of the boxes were to be fitted with new keys and locks, he made Judsing show him the new keys and in a moment he had waxed them. He had the wax in his hands, and he took impressions of them."

"But surely," said I, as Wrightson paused in his narrative, "there were more than two keys!"

"Yes, sir, and here comes the clever trick! You remember that I mentioned that Rollingston had some money sent him, and that he was waiting for it in the office. Yes? Well, he got his gold sent him on purpose, and waited to see where the keys were kept! He squared Judsing, who left the office one day. Rollingston walked in, took out the box key, made an impression of it and of the safe key in a few minutes, so he had the boxes and van-safes at his mercy."

"A clever scoundrel, indeed."

"Yes, sir. He had the keys made afterwards, and bided his time. Now and then, as you know, he used to travel with Charley Down, and while he was on the platform Rollingston would try the keys in the safes. They went all right after a while, and when Judsing told him of a good 'haul' they worked it together.

"When they went down in the Continental train that night they proposed to Charley to join them. He refused and would have given the alarm if Rollingston had not knocked him down with his pistol. Judsing tried to bribe him, as one might say, with Nance; but Charley was firm, and got knocked senseless. The safes were rifled, and shot was put in instead of gold. A confederate at Fairhill took some off, Rollingston and Judsing got into their compartments, and the 'gentleman' with the rest of the plunder, went on to Overtown in the train, while Judsing remained to look after the bullion boxes, and Charley.

"We found Charley all dazed, 'by a fall,' he said, and as nothing looked wrong, the boxes being sealed and locked apparently as usual—they went on to France. Charley wouldn't tell, and was arrested as I told you. Rollingston came back at 3 a.m. to London, with a transferred return Ostend ticket which his confederate had handed him that same evening.

"He had a hand bag and avoided all suspicion. He melted the gold, and sold a quantity of it, but some young woman told about him. He paid his partners very honest, but was caught at last, and the remainder of the gold, some few thousands, was found." *

"What eventually became of Charley and Miss Nancy?" I asked, rising.

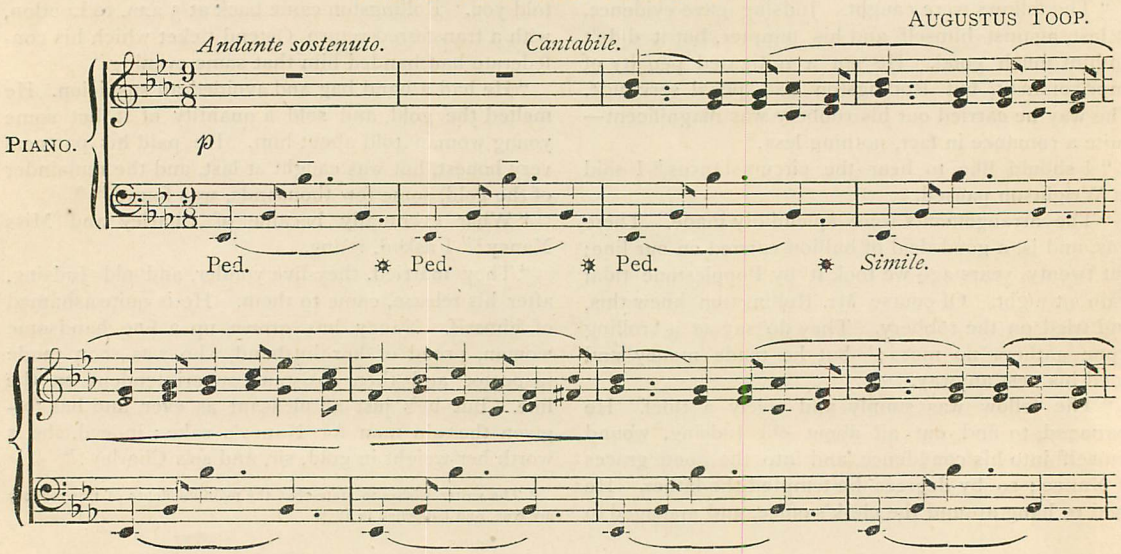
"They married, they live yonder, and old Judsing, after his release, came to them. He is quite ashamed of himself. Nancy has grown up a fine handsome woman, proud of her husband, who was soon made inspector and then assistant superintendent on the line. But he's just as pleasant as ever, and has forgiven the old man for Nancy's sake; indeed, she is worth her weight in gold, sir, and so's Charley!"

* The writer wishes to state that the main incidents of this robbery are true, and happened in 1855.

"Whispers."

PIECE FOR THE PIANOFORTE.

AUGUSTUS TOOP.



mf

ppp

mf *p* *rall. . e . dim. . . . .*

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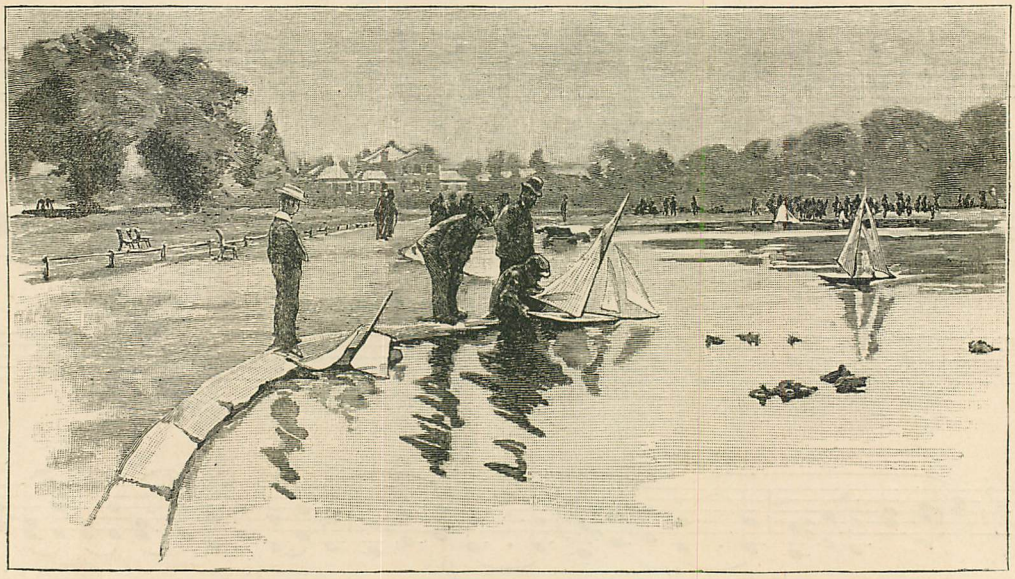
Ped. ✱

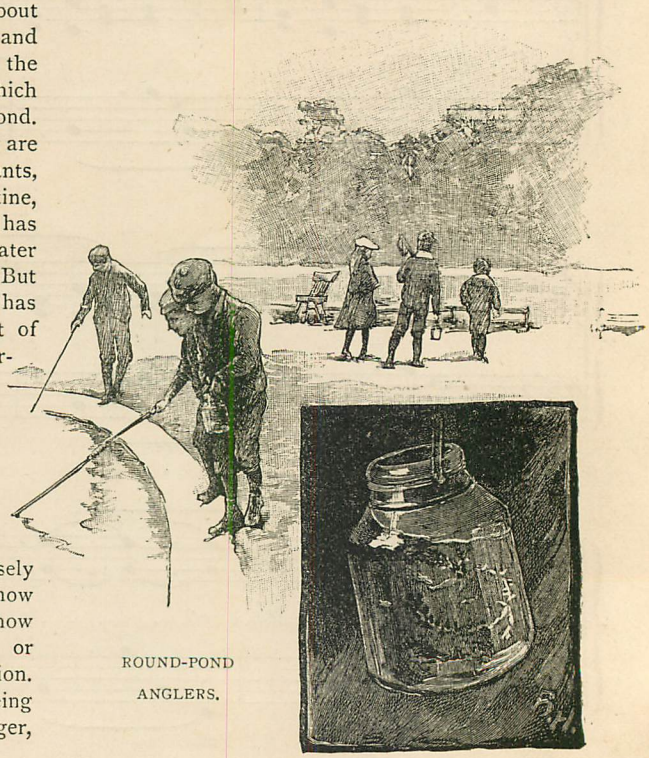
ROMANCE OF THE ROUND-POND.



AT THE ROUND-POND.

OF the many hundreds who daily frequent the Kensington Gardens care to trouble themselves about "the manners and customs" of the water-fowl which inhabit the Pond. Not that they are habitual tenants, for the Serpentine, further east, has at times greater attractions. But still, the Pond has a fair amount of resident water-fowl, and to these we address our remarks. Beyond feeding them at its marge, and laughing at the cool manner in which a brood of ducklings will clamber up on to a becalmed yacht, nay, take a voyage should a breeze fill its sails, few care to inquire into the habits of the water-fowl at the hands of the intelligent keepers in charge.

Where all the ducks and their broods so closely resemble one another, it is marvellous to note how exactly a mother knows her own hatching, and how jealously and cruelly she persecutes an orphan or stray duckling which innocently seeks her protection. One day I carefully watched such a position, being attracted to the bank by the cries of the little stranger, and its cruel treatment by its presumed mother. The poor little thing was "cheeping" piteously as it emerged from the frequent dive to escape the persecution of the mother duck, which pursued with feathers erect; the orphan dived, so did she, and the little



ROUND-POND ANGLERS.

thing emerged more and more exhausted after each dive. At last matters reached a climax in the duck emerging from a dive with the orphan in her beak, seized by the neck. Giving it a rough shake, she threw it from her to one side, and with crest erect she swam away with her brood. The spectators rescued the exhausted duckling, and made it over to a keeper.

These ducks are mostly mallards (Anas boschas) descended from individuals placed on the water by the Ranger, the Duke of Cambridge; their proper feeding-ground is at the station of the Royal Humane Society on the Serpentine, and thither repair the strong birds daily, the weaker, and those with broods, remaining on the pond, and being fed by the visitors. At the approach of evening, these leave the water with their broods, and roost on the surrounding grass.

The nesting of these water-fowl is very wonderful, and few, who had not been eye-witnesses, would believe that they nidificate *in the trees of the park*. Two are special favourites; the fifth elm on the right hand side of the Broadwalk of the Gardens, below the slope, and a rugged trunk near the fountains of the Serpentine, on the right hand side, looking southwards. But how do the tender broods of ducklings get down from their lofty nests in the Gardens? Their mothers, seizing them one by one by the neck, waddle downwards from branch to branch till the trunk is reached, and then each young one is dropped to the ground some ten or twelve feet. When each has thus been disposed of she flies down to the astonished brood, marshals it, and waddles off with the survivors to the Pond, some hundred yards distant. I say survivors, because some are maimed by the fall, and are left to their fate by the cruel mother, and others die of concussion. This wonder has been frequently witnessed. Once on the Pond, the brood is at home.

THE SWAN CHARGED IT WITH RUFFLED PLUMAGE.

Until quite recently, a swan was also on the Pond. He had incurred the futile wrath of the ducks by ruthlessly swallowing, at times, one or more of the ducklings; but ultimately, to their keen delight, judgment lighted on him in a manner quite unique, and, unless corroborated by eye-witnesses, incredible. A breeze was ruffling the Pond, and under its influence a toy yacht, in full sail, was tearing across while he was pruning his feathers in its centre. Apparently mistaking it

for a rival swan, or, in sheer mischief, he charged it with ruffled plumage, and received its bowsprit straight into his breast. He had not time to sing, as dying swans are said to, but expired from the unique injury. He has never been replaced, except, now and then, by a visitor from the Serpentine.

We must not leave the Pond without alluding to the excitement of the fishing season, which is well on in the summer, the fishers being the *gamins* of the neighbourhood, male and female; and the fished, the sticklebacks. The sporting papers open their columns to the skill and prowess of trout and salmon fishers; A., after a patient and wary struggle, has successfully brought a huge salmon to bank; B., on the other hand, has filled his basket with trout after two or three hours of fly-casting. But none record the wonders of stickleback fishing, though its excitement brings enjoyment to hundreds of fishers, male and female. Here are no elaborate rods, reels, and flies; here no gigantic wading boots, nor wicker baskets; these fishers go forth with their twigs, thread, crooked pin, or small hook, a pickle bottle, filled with Pond water, to hold the captures, and a few earth worms dug out of the neighbouring turf, and then the sport begins on the margin of the Pond, and, with very slight effort, a dozen or more of these interesting and pugnacious little fishes are transferred to the bottle, and carried off in triumph to adorn and amuse, perhaps, the humble home with its marvels in nest building, so graphically described by the late lamented Rev. J. G. Wood.

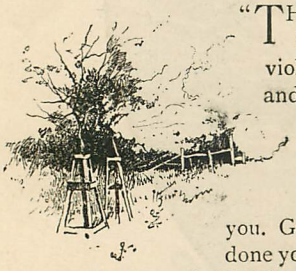
R. F. HUTCHINSON, M.D.

BARBARA MERIVALE.

By ARABELLA M. HOPKINSON, Author of "The Probation of Dorothy Travers," "Vere Thornleigh's Inheritance," "A Woman's Strength," etc. etc.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

"ADIEU, BARBARA."



"THERE, sit down, Barbara; never mind the violin. Grace is out still, and will not be in just yet awhile, so we will enjoy a real good talk before you begin work. It seems ages since I saw you. Going abroad has certainly done you good; you look better, and a trifle fatter, I think."

Barbara smiled. She had just returned from a month on the Continent with her uncle and aunt, Colonel and Mrs. Grey; the congenial companionship, the change, and the rest had benefited her greatly, and now she was seated in Mrs. Parry's drawing-room, braced and refreshed, to resume her lessons.

"You could not have gone for your holiday at a better time," continued that voluble lady. "Everyone has been in town, including myself and the girls, and Centrewood has been quite depopulated. And, oh! Barbara, I did long for you when I was listening to Malinowski; he is simply divine. But I must not begin talking music, or I shall never get through all I have to tell and discuss with you; and first and foremost, this affair of Mr. Richmond's. Did you ever hear anything so disgraceful as his conduct? Weren't you surprised?" looking hard at Barbara.

"Not very," answered Barbara, quite calmly and collectedly. The name of Richmond had no longer power to set her heart beating and her pulses throbbing. "I met them both and Lady Tancroft at Baveno, and although I only had a glimpse of them—they went away the next day—I fancied, somehow, that there was something between them."

"Very unpleasant for him, meeting you. For aught he knew, you might have written to Miss Denzil, and told her you had met him and Miss Parton together."

"Yes, he tried to avoid me, which was easy enough; but even if I had written to Miss Denzil, there would have been really nothing to tell her. She knew he was abroad with Lady Tancroft, and there was nothing wonderful in Miss Parton joining the party. Lady Tancroft always likes to have a girl with her, and Miss Parton is a very cheerful, bright kind of girl. It seemed a most natural arrangement."

"Well, of course, he has behaved abominably, and there is no doubt that he is marrying only for money. I hear Miss Parton is immensely rich, and that altogether he is very far from high-principled. Colonel Parry tells me there are all kinds of stories afloat about him here in the village—but really I cannot help congratulating him on having broken with Miss Denzil. A cold, shallow woman, who thinks of nothing but dress; how could a warm-hearted, genial man like Mr. Richmond be happy with her? Impossible!"

"He knew what she was like before he was engaged to her," said Barbara sternly. "They were cousins, and extremely intimate."

"Very remote cousins," rejoined Mrs. Parry. "Oh, pray! don't think I wish to defend him. Of course, his conduct is atrocious, but really, I would as soon marry a statue as Miss Denzil; and I don't wonder at his getting out of it."

Barbara said nothing. She was not going to find fault with the man she had once loved, worthless and unprincipled as she knew him now to be, dead as was her love for him. But her heart was full of pity for Minnie, who had loved him, as she knew by instinct,

with all the love she had to give, and had now been thrown aside—even as she herself had been—like an old glove, in favour of a woman who could count her thousands, where Minnie had had hundreds. Since she had been back home, she had heard the story not once or twice, but many times. Ditchworth and Charlton were ringing with it, and, divesting it of the mythology that had already gathered round it, Barbara made it out to run pretty well as follows :—

About a fortnight ago Richmond had written to Minnie in Cadogan Square to say that as he was quite unable to find the sort of employment that Lord Denzil had made the condition of their marriage, and that he felt that he was only wasting the best years of her life, he thought it better for both of them to break off the engagement altogether, and to leave them free and untrammelled. A week later he had married Miss Parton, the Australian heiress, the dear friend of Lady Pinxton, against the wishes of all her relatives, who, however, had no control over her, as her father and mother were both dead, and she was of age. The whole affair, with its deceit, its fortune-hunting, its ungenerous meanness, filled Barbara with scorn and contempt. She wondered how she had ever loved this man ; she blushed to think she had ; yet deep down in her heart she hoped and prayed he might be happy.

Mrs. Parry noted her silence, and drew her own conclusions. Her flirtation, as it had been called, with Richmond had not passed unnoticed in Centrewood. It had served its turn as gossip, and Mrs. Parry had not forgotten it.

"It is all very well for her to blame him," she thought to herself. "I expect she was madly in love with him once upon a time, and that not so long ago."

"Yes, Minnie is uninteresting," said Barbara at last, awaking to the fact that she had been sitting silent for about three minutes: "at least, I have always found her so; but I am so sorry for her. She was devoted to Mr. Richmond, so much so, that I wonder she let him go abroad for so long, away from her."

"Oh ! did not you know there was a great fuss about it? but he insisted that as Lord Denzil said he was to find employment, he would find it in acting gentleman courier to old Lady Tancroft and her sister. I expect he intended meeting Miss Parton all along; and as, no doubt, he could twist the two old ladies round his finger, he probably made them go to those places where he knew he should meet her. Oh! he has acted very dishonourably."

"Have you heard at all how poor Miss Denzil is?"

"Mrs. Murray saw her up in London one day last week, and says that outwardly she is much the same, if possible, colder and more silent than before, and looking thin. Poor thing ! I am very sorry for her, although I suspect she has had a lucky escape. And, talking of the Denzils, of course you have heard that Mr. Reilly's murderer has been caught ?"

"Oh, yes ! I heard it at Lugano. It created quite a sensation in our hotel, where there happened to be a little colony of Irish at the time."

"Then you know too, I suppose, that Mr. Denzil was mainly instrumental, not in his actual capture, but in running him to earth."

"So I heard, but I did not see it in any paper."

"And of course, now Mrs. Reilly will reward him by marrying him. Do you remember she did not go with the Denzils to London, but returned to Ireland, where, I suppose, she has seen Mr. Denzil daily? Poor man ! I do hope he will not get murdered himself."

"Murdered himself !" Barbara felt the warm blood ebbing away from her cheeks. "Murdered himself !" she reiterated. "What do you mean ?"

"Why, my dear, my meaning is plain enough. Of course, now Mr. Denzil is a marked man. These miscreants, who probably call themselves by some high-sounding name, to whom Mr. Reilly's murderer belongs, will have their revenge; see if they do not. It is very serious indeed, I think, and I am very sorry for the Denzils."

"Oh, Mrs. Parry !" cried Barbara, "surely you take too lugubrious a view of the case. It need not necessarily follow that Mr. Denzil will be murdered. He is not like one of their own party who has turned informer."

"No, of course not; but depend upon it, they will have a try at him ; at least, that is Colonel Parry's opinion ; and I agree with him that Mr. Denzil is running great risks. There is Grace just gone by the window, so now, I fear, the lesson must begin. She has been sadly idle up in London this last month, but I took her to hear as much good music as I could manage, and she enjoyed it greatly."

Barbara tried to feel interested in Grace—a great favourite of hers—and in all she was doing, but failed signally, for there was something tugging at her heart-strings ; a strange horrid feeling of dread and dismay for which she did not try to account. She gave Grace her lesson thoroughly and conscientiously; she stayed for luncheon, and still there it was. Not all Mrs. Parry's lively talk, or the girl's nonsense, or Colonel Parry's solid conversation could remove it, and as she walked to her next lesson through the bright July sun, she murmured almost unconsciously to herself : "It's Oliver." Yes, Oliver in danger ; Oliver no longer uninteresting, yet also no longer hers ; Oliver assuredly now going to be married to Mrs. Reilly.

"What folly it is !" she said to herself, as she quickened her speed. "I do not care for him. I would not have him when he wanted me. It is only this awful danger, this horrible idea that he may be murdered, which is too terrible. Surely Mrs. Parry is wrong ; and if she is right someone will warn him, and he will be saved. Oh yes ! he will be saved." But even as she said the words her reason contradicted them, for she knew that all the warnings in the world would not tempt Oliver to leave his post. "Perhaps, though, now that he is going to be married, he will take more care of himself," she continued. "I do hope she will make him happy. Oh !"

She started aside as she uttered the exclamation,

for someone had just jumped the hedge that bordered the road that she was pursuing, and was standing before her. She started with surprise when she saw him, for it was Richmond, the last person she would have expected to meet. He looked gloriously handsome as he stood there, with the sun playing over his hair and face, notwithstanding that he had grown older and a trifle haggard. Barbara gazed at him as indifferently as she might at the Apollo Belvedere. His beauty, of which she was as conscious as ever, had no longer power to move her; her love for him was quite dead. He held out his two hands to her, with his old radiant smile.

"You are surprised to see me, Barbara?" he said. "I startled you, I fear; but as I am here on purpose to see you, I could not lose the opportunity of meeting you. I am come to say good-bye."

She looked at him for a second with a calm, level gaze that made him wince. He knew at once that he had lost all influence over her, that she cared for him no longer—nay, more, that she despised him.

"Good-bye!" she said quietly, taking him at his word, and giving him her hand.

"Do you feel no interest in me, Barbara?" he asked quickly. "Don't you want to know why I am come to say good-bye?" Then, remembering the newspapers, those faithful chronicles of his proceedings, "Perhaps you do know, though?"

But she shook her head.

"I know nothing," she answered, "except that you are married. Good-bye!" she reiterated. "I must be getting on."

"I will walk with you," he said. "Don't forbid me to, Barbara. It's the last walk or talk I shall have with you for many a long day, perhaps for ever. Let me come."

She acquiesced silently. She could not resist his appeal, and for a few minutes they pursued their road without speaking.

"You have condemned me, Barbara," he said at last. "Don't deny it, for I know you have—condemned me unheard."

"Mr. Richmond," she answered gently, "your affairs are no business of mine. I have nothing to do with condemning you, or the contrary."

"Nevertheless, you have done so," he persisted. "Come, Barbara, confess you have had hard thoughts of me; or is it possible you have been charitable towards me?"

She turned round to him quickly.

"If you want me to say that I have thought your conduct honourable, manly, generous, I cannot, for I have thought just the reverse. Perhaps that is condemnation, but, as I said before, it is really nothing to me. I would much rather not mention the subject."

He flushed up; her words had stung him.

"Commend me to a woman for hardness!" he said.

But Barbara was not to be daunted by this well-tried and often effective masculine weapon.

"Am I hard?" she said gently. "I think not. Why should you ask me if I condemned you if you did not think yourself worthy of condemnation? But indeed, I would rather not speak of the matter. Are you going abroad?"

"Yes, my wife and I are going yachting round the world. We shall be away months, perhaps years. Last night it struck me suddenly that I might never return, and I thought I would come and say good-bye to you."

Barbara flushed up. The air seemed full of painful prognostications.

"It was kind of you," she said softly. "I am glad to have seen you again, and I hope you and Mrs. Richmond may come back safe and sound. Why shouldn't you?" she added lightly.

"Why, indeed?" he responded gaily. "Going round the world is a most ordinary enterprise in the present day: not half so venturesome as the grand tour was formerly. I shall probably be much safer in the Antipodes or in mid-ocean than Oliver Denzil is in the Emerald Isle. By the way, you know, of course, that the Reilly murderer was executed yesterday?"

"No, I did not know it," she said, trying to look indifferent. "I have not had time to read the paper yet to-day; and strangely enough, Mrs. Parry, who was talking about the murder, said nothing about it."

"Too busy talking to read her paper," he said laconically. "Yes, he was executed yesterday; and now, I suppose, the fair widow will soon give Denzil her hand. He has waited patiently for it, hasn't he?"

He looked hard at her as he spoke, and if she had not been taken up with the very dusty appearance of her boots, she would have seen a malicious smile gleaming in his eyes and the corners of his mouth.

"Very patiently," she answered, still intent on her boots.

Richmond laughed. It was not a pleasant laugh—hollow, dry, mocking.

"Not that I shall know anything about it," he said defiantly, "beyond what the newspapers tell me. The Denzils have done with me for ever." Then, as Barbara said nothing: "I suppose I must really say good-bye now," he continued moodily, "or I shall not be in time to catch the 3.30. Won't you wish me God-speed, Barbara?"

He caught both her hands in his, and looked her in the face. There was something like a lump in Barbara's throat, not for the man himself, but for the wasted possibilities in him, for the misused talents, for the deceptive beauty, for the knavery and trickery that might have been honesty and straightforwardness.

"Indeed I will, Mr. Richmond," she answered simply and earnestly, "with all my heart; and—and——"

"What?" eagerly.

"You—you—will be good to her, won't you?"

He smiled bitterly.

"You think me incapable of the most commonplace goodness, don't you?" he said.

"No, indeed. I believe that there is no one in the world incapable of goodness."

"Thanks, awfully! Then you class me with a common thief or murderer! I never thought it of you, Barbara."

"Oh, Mr. Richmond! why will you misunderstand? You know I don't."

"It sounded very like it. Ah, Barbara! if——"

"Don't 'if!'" she interrupted him quickly.

"I can't help it when I see you, and think—— But what is the good of thinking?"

But she did not colour as she would have done a few months ago. She only looked at him for a second with the same steady gaze, tinged with sadness as before.

"You must go now," she said gently, "or you will miss your train. With all my heart I wish you and Mrs. Richmond every happiness."

"Thank you," he said. "You forgive me, Barbara?"

"I have nothing to forgive," she answered proudly: "nothing."

"Good-bye, then," he said. "You believe in prayer, Barbara. Will you pray for me?"

"Yes," she said, "always, always. But," colouring scarlet, "you will—pray for yourself too, won't you?"

The next moment he had wrung her hand and was gone, and she stood looking after him with two big tears in her eyes. He was not, then, by any means altogether bad, this man—only weak, selfish, false, untrue to his better nature, deliberately choosing wrong rather than right, not because he was cursed with moral obliquity, but with his eyes open. And then she sighed, remembering the stories afloat about him in Centrewood, some of which she had heard and knew to be true, and which had put the first nail into the coffin of her affection for him.

If she had only seen him as he walked back into Centrewood, all the sentiment vanished out of his face after the first few minutes, to be replaced by a hard malicious smile, perhaps she would not have thought so kindly of him.

"SHE STARTED WITH SURPRISE WHEN SHE SAW HIM" (*p.* 736).

"Ah, pretty Barbara!" he murmured to himself, as he switched the tall grasses with his stick, "I couldn't have you myself, but no more shall Oliver Denzil. Thanks to the vampire, that can easily be managed. You evidently thoroughly believe that he is going to marry the widow, and as you are as proud as Lucifer, you will not put out your finger to lure him back. The rift between you will grow wider and wider, old-maidism and eternal violin lessons will stare you in the face, until one day, desperate and soured, you, pretty, sweet, smart Barbara Merivale, will marry some Centrewood doctor, or lawyer, or curate, who has been in love with you for years. Ha! ha! I think I shall be revenged then, Barbara, shan't I? Poor little girl!" he continued, his face softening; "it is rather a shame. Shall I run back and tell her it is all a lie—that Denzil does not care a brass farthing for the vampire? No, I cannot. I can't stand the idea of her being his wife. And, by Jove! I owe her one for that speech of hers to-day. Besides, it was not I that told her he was going to marry Mrs. Reilly. She knew it already. Why should I meddle with what does not concern me? She told me very plainly that my affairs were no business of hers; the same argument will apply to hers. No, I shall not interfere; and as I hear my train in the distance, I have not time to do so. Poor little Barbara! I wonder what kind of a fellow I should have been if I had married you. Who knows? Well, it's no good wondering, for there is my train, and if I don't take care I shall lose it. Adieu, Barbara!"

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

THE SUMMONS.

"HIS lordship, miss, wishes to speak to you in the drawing-room."

Barbara, her stepmother, and the children were just sitting down to their tea in the dining-room one lovely afternoon at the beginning of August, when Jane brought in this message. Barbara started. The Denzils, with a large party of friends, had but lately returned from London. What could Lord Denzil want with her? she wondered.

"Did he ask only for me, Jane?" she inquired.

"Yes, miss. It's Miss Barbara as I wants to see particular," he said.

"Go at once, Barbara," said Mrs. Merivale. "Pray, don't keep him waiting. I dare say he has some nice engagement for you."

Thus adjured, Barbara rose, and proceeded to the drawing-room with a vague sense of uneasiness about her that she could not shake off. As she entered the room, Lord Denzil was standing with his back to her, but when he heard the door open he turned round, and confronted her with a face so grave and so unwontedly pale, that she at once knew that her uneasiness had been justified.

"What is it, Lord Denzil?" she cried. "Is Lady Denzil——?"

But he cut her short.

"It's not Lady Denzil," he said, in a voice that quivered just a little. "Sit down, Barbara; the news concerns you."

"Me!" she exclaimed, turning pale. "Oh, Lord Denzil, tell me what it is!"

She was trembling all over, and Lord Denzil laid a kind hand upon her arm.

"Be calm," he said. "When I tell you the news concerns you, it is because it concerns Oliver."

"He is dead!" she said, in a strange unnatural voice, her face turning ashy white. "Yes, he is dead, and you are come to tell me."

"No," he answered quickly, looking at her narrowly. "Thank God, not so bad as that; but still, bad enough. He is blind, blinded for life!"

She shivered a little.

"Blinded!" she murmured. "Oh, what will he do?"

"That's just it," said Lord Denzil: "what will he do? And that is why I am come to you."

She smiled a dreary, miserable little smile.

"To me, Lord Denzil?" she said. "Why to me?"

Lord Denzil suddenly rose and stood up before her, his shrewd countenance grown strangely stern.

"You know why I come to you," he said, so severely that Barbara shrank away from him. "You know perfectly well that Oliver loves you."

She turned scarlet. How had Lord Denzil learnt this secret?

"Once," she murmured, so low that he could barely hear what she said. "Once he did."

"Is not once always, with Oliver?" retorted his father.

Barbara raised her drooping head, and looked him in the face.

"No," she said, timidly, "it is not." Then gathering courage: "Why don't you go to Mrs. Reilly?" she asked. "He is going to marry her."

Something like a smile shot into the shrewd grey eyes.

"Ah, indeed!" he said; "that is news to me. I was not aware of it. Perhaps, if that is the case, I had better go to Mrs. Reilly."

"You did not know it?" she cried, her eyes kindling involuntarily as hope rose within her. "I thought everyone knew it."

"Really?" satirically. "Well, everyone is very wise; wiser, indeed, than the two parties concerned; for I saw them both, Oliver and Mrs. Reilly, last week in Dublin, and, strange to say, they were both ignorant of this kind arrangement made for them by their friends. But look here, Barbara: this is no time for joking."

"I joke? Oh, Lord Denzil!"

"Do you mean to tell me that you really seriously believed that Oliver was going to marry Mrs. Reilly?"

"Quite seriously. I thought they were only waiting until she had been a widow two years. Why shouldn't they marry?"

"Because he loves you, and he told you so."

"I thought," her head drooping again, "he—because—he had changed his mind."

"Because you refused him. You see, I know all

about it. No, my little girl; you have yet to learn that Oliver is not the man to take one denial, nor yet half-a-dozen, if he has set his heart upon a thing. Who told you this lie about his going to marry Mrs. Reilly?"

"Everyone says so. The whole neighbourhood is talking about it."

"Hang the neighbourhood! I see, though, how the report arose. It was, no doubt, owing to that concert in the winter, when, I must say, Oliver and Mrs. Reilly made themselves very conspicuous together."

"I suppose so," said Barbara, a new radiant light in her eyes.

"Well, then, let me set you right. Oliver is as likely to marry Mrs. Reilly as I am to marry the Queen. That is pretty conclusive, isn't it? But I do not deny that he has been much interested in her story, in the tragedy of her husband's death—a most ghastly tragedy it was, too—and that, urged on by her, he has left no stone unturned to find out the perpetrator of the murder. In this he only acted with the other members of the Government; but Mrs. Reilly, who is a very clever woman, early in the day discovered his patience and bull-doggish tenacity of purpose, and to him she carried all the information she could obtain on the subject, until, by degrees, as the other men grew tired of her case, Oliver became her sole confidant. He sent her to Denzilstone last winter, partly because she is almost destitute, partly because he wanted to get rid of her, and lastly, he thought that if she did not leave Ireland and live in a family with sober, rational people, she would go out of her mind. As we pitied and liked her, and she liked us, and she could run up to town whenever she chose on all manner of false tracks, she stayed with us, as you know, some months. I wish to goodness Oliver had never seen her, never heard the name of Reilly, and he might have his two eyes now."

"It was revenge, then? Ah! I feared so."

"Yes. I have been in a fidget ever since O'Malley was caught. I—everyone has—warned Oliver; in fact, I begged him to come away at once, but he was wanted over there, and nothing would induce him to leave."

"And didn't he take precautions?"

"After a fashion, yes. He never went out without revolvers, and for a fortnight he put himself under police protection. But it bothered him so that he soon gave it up, and grew careless. The consequence is he was shot at as he was going to the horse-show yesterday, and the charge went into his eyes." Lord Denzil stopped, and Barbara stepped up to him, and laid her soft fingers on his shoulders.

"How can I help?" she whispered.

"You can give him back hope," he answered. "Look here, Barbara: he loves you."

"Are you sure?" she asked, blushing furiously.

"Still clinging to the Reilly fiction, eh? Well, I was with him last week, and he told me so; told me how he had tried leaving you alone, and it had failed; and that he intended getting leave as soon as he could, and coming here to try his luck again with you. But all that is changed now. I know Oliver; and I tell you, Barbara, that, although he loves you better than his life, he will never ask you to marry him now—never!"

"Then I must—I mean, are you not going to him, Lord Denzil?"

"Of course I am: I and his mother, and a London doctor, and a nurse, and I don't know what, all cross to-night."

"Then can't I go with you?"

Lord Denzil's face lighted up.

"Ah, Barbara! I see you understand me. You're a good girl."

"I'm not good," she cried, with a little strangled sob. "I want to go."

"It's not pity, then?"

"No," she whispered.

"The other thing, eh?"

"You will let me go, won't you?" she asked, piteously. "I could, perhaps, be a little help to Lady Denzil."

He laid his hand on her arm.

"My little girl," he said kindly, "I am very sorry to refuse you, but I must not allow you to accompany us to-night. Oliver is going on satisfactorily, but he is in a very critical condition, and must be kept perfectly quiet, and free from all excitement. If you were to go with us, you would not be able to see him. Lady Denzil and Minnie know nothing of his attachment to you; your presence would only cause wonder and mystification, which would probably leak out in his sick-room; and altogether, it would never do. So you must be content to be patient, and stay where you are for the present."

Barbara's face fell.

"I will do what you wish," she said submissively, "but I thought you wanted me to come with you."

"I wanted to ascertain if your heart were in the right place," he answered, "and I have satisfied myself on that point. Don't look so crestfallen; I will write to you as soon as ever I have seen him. Meanwhile, think your position well over, remembering that Oliver will probably be stone blind for life; and say nothing to anyone—not a word, do you hear? particularly not to the stepmother. Now I must go; we start for London in an hour. Oh, by the way, before I go, let me still further reassure you by telling you that Mrs. Reilly intends, when she is better, to become a nurse in one of the hospitals—if they will have her. Personally I think, poor soul, it is far more likely that she will have to be consigned to a lunatic asylum. She has been in a highly nervous, overwrought state ever since her husband's assassin was found, which was mainly owing to her exertions. I would tell you all about it, but it is too long a story to enter on now."

"Oh, yes! You go by the 6.20, I suppose? Does Miss Denzil go too?"

"Yes. It will be a very good thing for her. You have heard, of course, how that unprincipled young scoundrel treated her. Poor girl! she is well out of it; but she is silly enough to have been fond of him, and

naturally does not appreciate being jilted by him. Now, my dear child, good-bye."

"Will you—will you—if he is well enough—tell him——"

"What?"

"That I send him my—oh! I don't know how to say it—that I am so grieved for him—that——"

"There, there! that will do. I shall know what to tell him, don't you fear; and I hope I may soon come back for you. I don't think I shall dislike you for a daughter-in-law;" and off bustled Lord Denzil, leaving Barbara with the tears shining in her eyes, and yet with a soft happy smile playing round her lips.

An hour later he and Lady Denzil were on their way to London, and Barbara had shut herself up in her room, to get away from Mrs. Merivale's endless interrogations as to the purport of Lord Denzil's visit, and to review the new happiness and grief that had come to her hand in hand.

It was a bitter trial to her to have to stay behind and wait—more bitter than Lord Denzil at all realised—to lie awake at night and think of Oliver, of the wonderful fact that he still loved her, of the exquisite discovery that she loved him, and had actually done so for some time without knowing it—to grieve for his spoilt life, his career cut short, his blighted hopes—and in the darkness of the night to blush with joy to think that perhaps the devotion of her life, of every faculty she possessed, might, in a tiny degree, mitigate his sufferings. The circumstance of the assault upon him was in everyone's mouth; the newspapers were full of it; every house Barbara went to was ringing with it; and as she eagerly devoured the accounts, the articles, the comments on the subject, she realised what kind of a man he was who loved her, and her eyes would kindle with a sweet exultation as she pictured to herself how she would try and smooth his path for him, how her eyes would be his eyes, her pen his pen, her love his guiding star. A strange peace and calm had fallen upon her with this new love, a sense of security and tranquil happiness very different from the restless excitement and apprehension that had kept her up to fever pitch during Richmond's reign, that made her long to tell even her stepmother her cherished secret. But this she might not do, for Lord Denzil had expressly bade her mention it to no one. He knew and understood his son well, and he felt that, with his blindness, an obstacle to his union with Barbara had arisen which it would require very delicate handling to overcome—if overcome it ever would be. And meanwhile, he wrote to the girl every day letters to report on the invalid, posted to reach Ditchworth by the early morning post, so that she might peruse them undisturbed by Mrs. Merivale's vigilant eyes. They were very sad letters—at least, so they seemed to her. There was not the faintest chance for Oliver's eyesight, and he was altogether in too precarious a state for Barbara to be mentioned to him at present.

At last, at the end of a month, they assumed a more cheerful tone. Mr. Denzil was decidedly improving rapidly, so that it was not altogether a surprise to Barbara to find, on coming home one late afternoon at the end of September, Lord Denzil sitting in the drawing-room awaiting her.

He looked very old and careworn, but he smiled when he saw her. Her beauty was always a pleasure to him, yet now it gave him a fresh pang as he reflected that never again would Oliver look upon that face that he loved so well. With a little cry of joy, she sprang towards him.

"Oh, Lord Denzil!" she cried, relieved by his smile, for she did not know what his sudden appearance might not portend, "you have come for me, haven't you? Have you brought me any message from him?"

"I have," gravely. "He is certainly much better; and yesterday, when I was alone with him, I told him you were coming to see him."

"Yes; and what did he say?"

"He said you must not come——"

"I must not come!"

"Listen until I have finished, and then you may ask me any questions you like. Of course he understood what your going to him means, and he says that he will never allow it: that if you marry him it will be out of kindness and pity, that you do not care for him, and that it would be a cruel fate for you to be tied to a blind man whom you had married without love. I reasoned with him as much as I dared in his state of health, but in vain; and at last I left him——"

"But I do! I do!" cried Barbara.

"You do what?" asked Lord Denzil curtly.

"I—I—love him," she whispered, colouring crimson, with drooping head and downcast eyes.

"Then you must tell him so," he answered; "and pretty plainly too, or he will not believe you. He used to be brave, resolute, and pertinacious, but this misfortune has knocked him out of time. He lies all day without speaking, and when he does open his mouth he is irritable and surly. He has lost his courage, his hope, his ambition. He vows he will throw everything up, retire from public life, and go about with a dog by a string. In fact, he is a completely altered man."

The tears were brimming over in Barbara's eyes by this time.

"Oh, Lord Denzil!" she cried, "don't you see he is ill, suffering, wretched? He is not really altered; but think what it must be to him to see his whole life blighted at one stroke! Oh, let me go to him at once!"

"Impossible to-night; to-morrow, perhaps. But first of all you must listen to me, and patiently too. I am not going to allow you to commit yourself without stating the case to you in all its unvarnished ugliness. After that you shall sleep upon it, and give me your answer to-morrow. If it is in the negative, I shall think none the worse of you for it. Well, then, Oliver is, and always will be, stone blind, and, as a consequence, very helpless and dependent. His wife will have to lead, probably, a somewhat arduous life. She will have to be, in many cases, his eyes, his fingers—in short, his second self. It will be a life with a constant strain upon it, a life of self-abnegation,

of self-surrender, a tied life. Do you understand me?"

"Quite," she answered, with a radiant smile. "And is that all? Oh, Lord Denzil!" she added humbly, "it is a beautiful life you have pictured. I don't require a night, or even an hour, to give you my answer. Please let me go with you to-morrow."

"Let you!" he cried; "of course I will. And allow me to tell you that if you had given him up, if you had not proved yourself the woman I took you for, I would never have forgiven you—never! You would have finished the work those miscreants have begun. As it is, God bless you!"

He drew her to himself and kissed her solemnly on the forehead, and she saw the tears shining in his keen old eyes.

"Did you think, Lord Denzil," she asked, "that I could be such a wretch as to give him up because he is blind? Why, it will be the happiness of my life to do all I can for him."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Women are such queer creatures," he said. "One never knows what they will do. It has been an extraordinary thing to me that nothing short of this misfortune has sufficed to make you care for him."

"Yes," she answered humbly.

She could not tell Lord Denzil that she knew now that her love for Oliver had been growing for some time past. No; all that must be reserved for Oliver himself.

"'WILL YOU—WILL YOU—IF HE IS WELL ENOUGH—TELL HIM——'" (*p.* 740).

"Don't look so ashamed of yourself, my child," said his lordship kindly. "After all, I honour and respect you for your delay. Most girls would have jumped at the future Lord Denzil instead of keeping him waiting. You have been honest and true, as your good father was. You have no cause to blush."

"And Lady Denzil?" asked Barbara, anxious to change the subject, "how is she? Does she know?"

Lord Denzil shook his head.

"No," he answered. "I thought it best to say

nothing until I had seen you again. As to her health, it is wonderful. She has forgotten herself in Oliver. It sounds strange, but I think she has been very happy nursing him—that is, as much as she could. It has done Minnie good, too. She is delighted with Ireland, and is much better, and, curiously enough, she likes and eagerly swallows all the blarney. Hullo! here is the stepmother. Shall I tell her?"

Barbara nodded her assent, slipping out of the room as Mrs. Merivale came in

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CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

AT LAST.

"EXPECT me to-morrow morning, usual hour. Barbara Merivale comes with me. Say nothing to Oliver."

Such was the telegram that was placed in Lady Denzil's bewildered hands the day after Lord Denzil's interview with Barbara, and which she read out loud to her daughter.

"'Barbara Merivale'—yes, those are the words undoubtedly—'comes with me.' Barbara Merivale!" she repeated. "I wonder why she is coming?"

"Because she likes to push herself everywhere," said Minnie bitterly, rising with heightened colour from her seat, and taking the telegram from her mother's hand.

"But she could not come without your father's consent. I do not understand it at all," returned Lady Denzil helplessly.

"Don't you?" asked Minnie sarcastically. "I do, perfectly. She has been making a dead set at Oliver for some time past, as she did formerly at——"

Here she stopped, and her countenance became dark as a thunder-cloud. But Lady Denzil did not notice it; she was quite absorbed in the astonishing fact that her old favourite, Barbara, was coming to Ireland.

"Seeing, however, that it was useless," continued Miss Denzil, recovering herself, "she became desperate, and taking advantage of father's good-nature, she has resorted to this last device to thrust herself upon Oliver, and by making herself useful to him now he is blind, she hopes eventually to succeed in marrying him. She is a schemer—and a very clever one, too; and as she is wild to be married, and to get away from that vulgar stepmother and the eternal violin lessons, you may be sure she will manage to do so, and Oliver will be her victim."

Minnie paused, quite exhausted by such a long sentence, delivered with so much energy.

"I think you are unjust to Barbara, dear," said Lady Denzil mildly. "I do not believe her to be a schemer. I always did, and always shall, think her a good and very charming girl; and I regret much that I listened to you, and did not show her more kindness last year, both before and after her father's death."

"Then you will be very pleased to have her for a daughter-in-law, I suppose?" retorted Minnie acrimoniously: "for that is what she intends to become, you may be sure. How father could be so weak as to be taken in by her, I can't think."

"Your father is not a weak man," said Lady Denzil. "He must have some reason for bringing her; and do you know, Minnie, I cannot help fancying that perhaps poor Oliver is in love with her. It is not unlikely, you know, for she is so very pretty and taking. I have been thinking it over, and I am nearly sure that it was her name he kept muttering to himself the other day, when he was delirious, and I was sitting with him."

"You are always fancying things, mother. I have often been with Oliver when he was delirious, and I never heard her name. Now I must dress to drive with Lady Pontifex;" and with a smile of contempt for her parent's folly, Minnie rose, and left the room.

It was very early the next morning when Barbara, after a sleepless night, set foot for the first time on Irish soil. All night long she had lain awake, thinking of Oliver, dreading, yet longing, for her meeting with him, until, with the first streak of dawn, she was upon deck, to get the earliest view of the famous Dublin harbour. She found Lord Denzil there before her, quietly smoking his cigar, and full of spirits at the prospect of the effect of her presence upon his son.

It was still much too early, when they reached the house in the Phœnix Park where Oliver was being nursed, for either Lady Denzil or Minnie to be downstairs to welcome them. The servants, however, were all about, and breakfast was awaiting them, so Lord Denzil decreed that after Barbara had partaken of some food she was to go at once to her room, and lie down until he summoned her.

"Now, mind what I say," he repeated peremptorily, as he opened the door of the dining-room for her. "You go to bed, and don't get up till you are called; and meanwhile, I will enlighten Lady Denzil. You still look rather like a ghost, although your breakfast has put a little colour into your cheeks."

Barbara smiled, and obeyed, that is, as far as going to her room was concerned, but she did not go to bed. She was too much excited to think of doing anything of the kind, but opening her windows wide, she leant half-way out of them, gazing with ecstasy at the fair scene around her.

Go to bed! to sleep! Lord Denzil might as well have bid her dance a minuet. Much as she wished to obey him, this time it was out of the question. Her whole soul was full of Oliver. Coming into the house where he lay, she could realise so far better than she had before all that had befallen him. She longed to go out, to look upon the scene of the assault, but she longed, above all, to go to him, and tell him——and as she thought of what she had to tell him, the crimson colour rushed into her face, and her breath came short and quick. But as she could do none of these things, she contented herself with unpacking and arranging her slender wardrobe, and then, in deference to Lord Denzil's wishes, and really tired out, she lay down on the sofa, and tried to go to sleep. But in vain. Every time she closed her eyes she saw Oliver, single-handed against two ruffians, heard the report of the gun, the flash, the fall, and the rescue, the flight, and—here she would smile, understanding Mrs. Reilly's feelings—the capture of one of the miscreants, until at last she did

"I AM COME TO BE YOUR EYES, TO TRY TO BE EVERYTHING TO YOU" (*p.* 744).

sink into a brief uneasy slumber, from which she was roused by a tap at the door.

"Come in," she cried, at once on the alert; and then the door opened, and Lady Denzil came in. She advanced towards the girl with open arms.

"Barbara!" she cried, and by her voice alone Barbara could tell that she knew all.

"Dear Lady Denzil," she responded, blushing hotly; and the next moment her head was on Lady Denzil's shoulder, and she was being tremulously kissed.

"He is very ill, Barbara," sobbed the poor woman. "Oh, my dear! if you had only married him at the beginning, perhaps this would never have happened."

Barbara felt herself a criminal of the blackest dye, not perceiving the weakness of the argument.

"Oh, Lady Denzil!" she cried. "I thought he was better."

"Oh yes, he is; and now that I know all about his attachment to you, I am sure that your coming will be the making of him. I think it must have been the knowledge that he must forego you that so completely crushed him, for I never could have believed that he would be so depressed as he has been. It has made my heart ache to see him."

Barbara's eyes filled with tears.

"Can one wonder?" she asked. "Oh, Lady Denzil! when can I see him?"

"That is what I came to tell you. Lord Denzil is gone to him now, to prepare him for your arrival, and to convince him that you are not come out of pity. He will have rather a hard matter, for this misfortune has altered my poor boy: he is irritable and suspicious where he used to be sweet-tempered and trustful, but I suppose he will come round in time."

"Of course he will," cried Barbara. "Illness alters everyone for the time being, but when he is physically well he will be himself again."

"Ah, Barbara! you are young and hopeful. I am glad you are, for you will need to be brave when you see him. You won't be shocked, dear, will you? for the doctors assure me that, with great care, beyond the loss of his eyesight, his poor face will not be scarred."

At this point Lady Denzil fairly broke down and cried, and Barbara, of course, followed suit. Perhaps it was the best thing they could both have done, for their feelings were at full tension, and they were still wiping their eyes when Lord Denzil knocked at the door.

"Barbara is to come," he called out in his curt peremptory manner, and she rose at once.

"Kiss me, dear Lady Denzil," she whispered, "and wish me God-speed."

Lady Denzil kissed her warmly.

"God bless you, dear child!" she murmured, and opened the door to let her pass out.

There stood Lord Denzil, his face radiant.

"Well, Barbara," he said, "rested, eh? I have had a tough battle with Master Oliver, but I think I have convinced him at last, and if anyone can restore him his health and courage, you will. You are not afraid?" seeing how pale she looked.

"No," she said, with a bright light in her eyes. "No, I am not afraid."

As they walked down the passage, they met Minnie.

She gave Barbara a cold impertinent stare and a little nod of recognition, followed by a derisive smile, when she saw that she and Lord Denzil were making for Oliver's room.

"Does she know?" whispered Barbara; and Lord Denzil shook his head.

The next moment he had opened a door, and was motioning her to go in. With beating heart, and trembling with emotion, the girl crossed the threshold, and entered the room. It was in semi-darkness, all the blinds drawn down and the shutters partially closed, so much so that, at first, in her agitation, she could see nothing. Very soon, however, she distinguished at the far end of the large room a sofa, and a figure lying on it.

"Is that Barbara?" asked Oliver's voice, and the next moment she was kneeling by his side.

"Yes, dear," she said softly, fighting down her emotion, and trying to be quite calm. "It is I, your Barbara."

"My Barbara!" he repeated, "my precious, beautiful Barbara! And so you are come to me, darling, to me, a blind, useless log."

"Not useless, dearest," timidly taking his hand. "You can't be useless with your brains and your talents; and as for the other, I am come to be your eyes, to try to be everything to you."

For a moment there was silence in the room, and then he spoke.

"It is just like your sweet charity and pity, my love, my dearest love, but I cannot accept this sacrifice at your hands. I am not talking sentimental nonsense. I mean every word I say. I can never consent that a young, beautiful, active creature like you should be chained to a useless maimed object, as I shall be for the rest of my days. I thank you, my darling, from the bottom of my heart; you will always be to me the sweetest memory, the only love of my life, but I love you far too well to drag you into my own unfortunate existence. I must dree my own weird as best I can; but why should I involve you in it?"

"Because," her voice faltering with emotion, "because your weird is my weird, your misfortune my misfortune, your life my life. Oh, Oliver!" with a piteous little sob, "you think I am come to you out of pity and charity. How can I convince you to the contrary? Don't, don't send me away. I cannot live without you; because, dear," her voice sinking to a whisper, her face crimson with blushes, "I love you so!"

Half-an-hour later Lord and Lady Denzil entered the room together.

"Well, Oliver," said his lordship, lowering his usually sonorous tones. "Well, Oliver, have I brought you a good doctor?"

"You have brought me new life," he answered, all the depression and despondency vanished from his voice. "I am a different man from what I was yesterday. Mother?"

"Yes, my dear boy."

"What do you say to your new daughter? Of course you love her already; who could help it? but you will love her ten times more when you know what she has done for your son. She found me a miserable, faint-hearted wretch, and in half-an-hour she has restored to me my courage, my hope, my ambition. We are not going to give up public life, are we, Barbara *mia?*"

"No," said Barbara softly; "we are going to give up nothing."

"I tell you what it is, Oliver," exclaimed Lord Denzil, radiant with happiness, "you will have to give up Barbara, and that at once too. She is a charming little girl, and I highly approve of her as a daughter-in-law, but if she stays here too long I will not answer for the consequences to you."

"To me! Why, has she not done wonders for me?"

"Just so; so I shall carry her off now, and leave her influence to work silently, for you have talked quite long enough on exciting topics. Public life, indeed! If I had known that you two would be setting to work to discuss those kind of things, I should have fetched her long ago. I never dreamt of your getting at this initial stage beyond loves and doves, and hearts and darts."

Oliver smiled, and Lady Denzil gazed rapturously at his poor, disfigured, bandaged face. She had not seen him smile once through all these weeks.

"Well, I suppose I must spare Barbara now," he said, "and you shall take her downstairs, and introduce her to Minnie as her future sister-in-law. Poor Minnie!"

"Lucky Minnie!" said Lord Denzil, his face growing hard and stern: "to be rid before it was too late of that——"

"Come, Denzil," said his wife, "don't be too hard on Val. We were all very fond of him when he was with us."

"Speak for yourself, my lady. I liked Val, he amused me, but I never had any opinion of him; and if I had known all I do now about him, he should never have darkened my doors. But enough about him. He is not worth talking about, and I trust Minnie may soon console herself. She is going out with the Pontifexes again to-day, isn't she? Come, Barbara, I will take you to her. I wonder what she will say when I introduce you as the future Mrs. Denzil?"

"Don't keep her too long, father. I can't spare her. I must have her back again soon."

Barbara, who had been turning red, and then white, during the conversation about Richmond, comforted, however, by the pressure of Oliver's strong fingers about her hand, which told her that he knew all, rose to go reluctantly.

"Dearest," she murmured, as she bent over the sofa, "when I come back, shall I bring my fiddle, and play you to sleep with nice soft schlummerlieder?"

"Yes, sweetheart," he answered; "play to me, talk to me, do anything you like, only don't leave me for long to-day, so that I may indeed realise that you are really mine—mine for ever, my own sweet Barbara!"

THE END.

THE FLOWER-SELLER.

ROSES, fresh roses! Who'll buy my roses?
Pink as the morning, a-sparkle with dew!
Life must be roses to such lovely ladies!
Take mine I pray you, dear madam—will you?
Look how each petal offers its fragrance,
Glad for your pleasure to wither and die,
Such are some hearts that you value too lightly!
Ladies, dear ladies! You surely will buy!

Violets have I, and lilies and myrtle—
In your dark hair would a poppy look best—
Lay in your bosom this jessamine cluster—
Sixpence, sir, those—for just what you like best.
Ah, pray remember, friends, Love like the flower-seller
Calls to you, comes to you *once* in the day.
Seize then our wares! And lean low—here's a secret
Cupid and I are in league—and away!

THE CARE OF ONE'S CLOTHES.

BY JOSEPHA CRANE.

UCH is now written and said concerning dress and clothing generally. Where to buy good materials or clothes ready made, and how to make, mend and when to wear them. But any close observer of dress cannot have failed to note that where one girl who has but a small allowance for dress will always be well turned out on all and every occasion, be it at home or abroad, another who has double or quadruple the amount to spend often looks shabby, her clothes, though well made, have no freshness about them, and there are various small details, too numerous to name, which are not carefully attended to, or else are altogether absent. This latter state of things is often accounted for by want of care, far more than lack of money, and consequently it has occurred to me to give a few hints to girls on the subject.

It is, let me say in starting, an important one. If you are told in Holy Writ to "eat and drink to the glory of God," you can most assuredly dress so as to honour or dishonour, please or displease Him. You can bring principle into the small matter of selecting a dress or hat, the way you wear them and the care with which you keep them. As the beautiful works of Almighty God praise Him, so can you, by wearing what is pretty, becoming, and artistic, if that is consonant with your means, and it nearly always is so. It is more a matter of taste than money.

And a well-dressed woman is certainly a pleasanter object to contemplate than an ill-dressed one, consequently to look nice may come under the head of duty to your neighbour as well as yourself. It is to some people most irritating and annoying to see colours worn together that do not harmonise, clothes that in no respect follow the line of beauty, and small accessories untidy or absent; and even if such are not irritated it is decidedly better altogether to be pleasant to look at. When you are yourselves well and tidily clothed, unconsciously you are in a sweeter temper, less shy—if such is your affliction—and more at your ease.

Granting this, then, to be the case, that you aim at pretty and good dressing, let us see how you can be helped in your laudable endeavour, by a few suggestions that may be fresh to you or may prove to be the germ of others.

The underclothing of a woman should always be neat and orderly and as pretty as she can afford to have it. I may hit the conscience of some reader when I remark that I have been over and over again shocked and astonished by the state of the undergarments worn by those who were externally neatly and well-dressed. A girl who would not go out with a missing button on shoe or glove, who would be unhappy if her collar was not immaculate and her dress in perfect order, will often, when shorn of these, reveal a very opposite state of things. Torn and unmended underlinen, or that has the lace or embroidery in holes, or coming off in parts; buttons hanging by a thread, or their place taken by a pin, frayed edges of skirts, stockings full of holes, and sometimes—this is true, though unpleasant to name—many of the articles themselves worn when more soiled than perfect cleanliness permits; all this I have seen repeatedly, where carelessness and not great poverty was the obvious cause.

All this is extremely unbecoming and objectionable, and whether it be a young duchess, whose delicate clothing is adorned with the finest lace, or the poor cottager or shop girl, who has cheap coarse things made of unbleached calico, all should be clean and in order.

To attain this end get good clothing in the first instance. Ready-made underclothing, the cheapness of which is often the result of the sweating system, can rarely be rightfully encouraged. It is better to have a small stock of underclothing, and renew it as it wears out, than to buy a great deal at once. Always incline to good material and little trimming, rather than common stuff with loads of cheap embroidery and lace that will stand but few visits to the laundry and always looks the rubbish that it is.

Each week as the clothes return from the wash you should go over them carefully, giving them the stitch in time which is proverbially said to "save nine."

Some people, when they notice a hole or anything needing repair, stuff the article into a drawer, and when several have accumulated spend some time in mending. This, however, is not the better plan, and if you have not a large stock of things the temptation to wear them unmended is very great.

If buttons are worn out, remove them altogether. Linen buttons are very inexpensive, and some new buttons neatly sewn on will freshen the appearance of the article to which they belong.

All woollen and merino vests, etc., should be carefully overlooked after each washing, as a very tiny hole, scarcely larger than the head of a pin, will soon spread if not mended at once. With care you can make these comparatively expensive items of your wardrobe last a very long time.

When you have mended the freshly-washed linen, etc., place each article underneath those in your drawer; this plan ensures all being worn equally in turn.

A girl who has the good desire to look nice and be neat is often vexed in her soul by the rapidity with which her dresses wear out, particularly if her purse is not replenished quarterly with equal quickness. If girls are not very rich I always advocate the possession of a few, rather than many, dresses, etc., as these can be worn while in fashion, or at least not very conspicuously out of it; and for all reasons it is a better plan than to have a great many half-worn articles of attire.

But you who grieve over the rapid wearing out of these, your few dresses, etc., can take heart, as well as

take the hints here given. There are several methods by which your clothes can be made to last much longer and look well longer, if you will but adopt them.

When you come in from a walk or change your dress for any reason, or take it off when going to bed, you should carefully shake and brush it before laying it away or hanging it up. Serge dresses require this being done very much more, perhaps, than others, for they catch the dust, and the latter by no means improves their appearance. Braid should be well brushed and the folds of the dress opened and divested of fluff, dust, etc. You should often turn out the sleeves of your dress and brush them well, and when you do this you will be astonished to find how much dust accumulates there.

Look over your dresses often and renew the braid if it is beyond mending at the bottom, and place fresh trimming where it is needed. These small things add very much to the nice appearance of a dress and certainly preserve it a good deal. When the cuffs or edge of collar show signs of being threadbare, before actual holes come, if you turn in the edges and reline collar and cuffs with a little piece of silk, you will be astonished to find how fresh a look it gives to both. Fur on your jacket that needs a few stitches should never be left as it is. Of course mending fur is very tiresome, but you can do it more easily if you keep down the long hairs with a card, so as not to entangle the former in your thread, and to allow of your seeing where you place your needle; and also if the needle is what is called a "glover," used by glove makers in the making of gloves: these can be had at most drapers', and are useful for the sewing of leather or kid.

The very way in which you hang up your dresses will assist towards spoiling or preserving them. If you have a pretty evening dress that will not bear crushing, lay it carefully by itself in a long drawer or trunk. If you hang it up put a sheet round it so as carefully to exclude all dust and smuts. If you live in London or any large town the latter are enemies you must carefully guard against, as, particularly when accompanied by a foggy atmosphere, they wage war against delicate materials and pretty colours.

Always see that there are loops of braid or ribbon on all your dresses, cloaks, etc., etc., by which to hang them. Few things spoil these more than hanging them up by the band, or the dress itself.

In travelling fold your dresses as they are—not inside out—and lay them carefully on the tray of your box, or within your dress-basket. Very much harm can be done to your clothes by careless packing; and if, on the other hand, you carefully fold everything, smoothing frills down and observing the natural pleats of the article, the latter will bear its journey and be none the worse for it. Of course if you place heavy things, boots, books, etc., on delicate dresses, roll up what should be laid flat, and cram in too many things, your common sense will tell you that the probable result will be very unsatisfactory.

A very great deal can be done in the way of preserving your clothes by the expenditure of a little thought and a little time.

I never advocate untidiness or the wearing of soiled or ragged clothes at any hour of the day, but still it stands to reason that if you have a nice new dress and you wear it when it is not necessary that you should do so, you will soon rob it of its freshness. It is a very good rule, which, however, has, as all rules have, its exception, not to wear in the house that which you wear out of doors, not, at all events, while the costume for the latter purpose is new. I am not going to give you any advice about never sitting down in a good dress, because such is purely ridiculous, but I do say that a thoughtful girl will make her walking toilette last very much longer by removing it when she comes in than will the girl who wears it in the house continually. Many a dress, too, that is quite serviceable and nice for home wear, cannot quite stand the bright sunshine and the *évidence* of walking out in it, excepting in the country or garden.

Cotton dresses tumble, as well as soil, very quickly, but you will keep them fresh and nice for a considerable time if you do not wear them much or at all indoors. Keep your last year's cottons for the latter purpose during the hot weather and in winter retain an old dress—mind that it is neat and in good order—for wearing about the house and for sitting over the fire in, when all your dear bosom friends come to your sanctum for afternoon tea.

Even if rigid economy is not absolutely necessary to you, your dresses will look much better if this plan is adopted.

If you do any dusting in the morning, or help in the kitchen or bedrooms, wear a large apron, even over your old dress. Accidents may happen and dust is liable to come, and it is nicer and cleaner to think that the big holland apron which almost covers your skirt, with its bib which protects your bodice, can be sent to the wash. A pair of loose holland sleeves, with buttoned wrist-bands and elastic run into the top hem, are very useful. If you are an artist you will, of course, have a provision of both, for a dress that bears paint marks is not at all sightly.

For gardening, of course, it is the same, only here I would advise an apron capable of coming into contact with earth and damp, and consequently rough and strong.

Some people think that dressing for dinner or high tea, or whatever the evening repast may be, is a sign of extravagance and a wish to ape those whose establishments are large and whose means are ample. As a matter of fact this plan is a strictly economical one, and can be recommended to all who wish to take care of their clothes and make them last as long as possible.

It is a nice arrangement and one which adds considerably to the comfort as well as the appearance of the person who adopts it. Especially in winter a thick woollen dress, which has been worn half or all the day, is somewhat hot when the gas or lamps are lighted, a good fire is burning and curtains drawn to exclude all draught. It makes the dinner or tea table bright to see a *quasi* evening dress, and anything that makes home more cheerful is so much to the good. I have

used the word *quasi* advisedly. Of course, if you are well off and have a good establishment and late dinner, evening dress in accordance with your means will be worn by you as a matter of course. But if you are poor, or, at all events, have not large means and only a small establishment, it is, while advisable to wear another dress than a walking or house one for dinner, as distinctly not desirable to wear out old finery or have a smart dress. The latter is out of keeping with a simple *ménage*, and nothing looks so shabby-genteel as veteran evening dresses worn when on their last legs. If you wish, and are in duty bound to use up some party or dinner dresses in this way, take off some of the smartness and modify them for home use. Don't come down to cold mutton and boiled potatoes and rice pudding in the dress that did duty for the big crushes you went to last year, or the grand dinner parties at your rich relation's. It is out of place and ridiculous.

But if you do not go out much into society, and consequently have no evening dresses, old or new, at your command, you still can dress for the evening by wearing an old summer dress as it is or arranged in any way you please. A dressy-looking blouse worn with old skirts is a good plan, or an old summer dress with the sleeves shortened to the elbow will often save your other clothes and look nice and bright.

Wearing your walking shoes and boots in the house is a bad plan and not a clean one at all. Care in the blacking and polishing generally, and sending your foot-gear to be repaired in time, will make it last very much longer than if you are careless. You should brush your hats and bonnets with a light brush after wearing and put them by carefully, having drawn all strings through your fingers.

Keep your clothes in separate drawers, etc., as much as possible, and do not tumble up ribbons, gloves, shoes, hair pins, hats and all kinds of things anyhow in any fashion. Nothing is so destructive of clothing as untidiness in this respect.

If you like to keep your ribbons, hats, and all your minor accessories of dress fresh and nice, you should arrange your drawers accordingly. Keep your things in card-board boxes or cases, and line the bottom of your drawers with holland fastened at the corners with small tacks, which can be removed when you have the holland washed. Some people lay a little cotton-wool between it and the wood, and the slight padding thus effected is convenient, as some piece of daintiness can be pinned down and kept in place. Before closing these few hints I would say that one golden rule for the care of clothes is to know how and when to wear them, and another, equally golden, is to be possessed of those articles which serve to protect them.

By the first, I mean that you should suit your attire to time and place. If you go to the sea-side or on a country visit you will very speedily spoil those clothes which in a town would have lasted a considerable time. Dainty boots in fields, or worn on a country road or on the shore with sand and pebbles, will soon be ruined, and the pretty muslins and delicate cottons or *mousseline de laines*, so charming for careful use, will soon be spoilt if you go out blackberrying in them, or take a boating expedition. Stout boots, dresses that will bear rough usage and a chance wetting, hats that will keep on in a gale, or not be useless for future wear if they encounter some evening mists—all these are necessary for the girl who wants to look properly dressed on all occasions and who wishes to save her better and smarter things. Nothing, hardly, is so ugly as draggled finery, and a hat with limp feathers and flowers, a discoloured costume, and delicate shoes all rent and out of shape, are all unseemly.

If you wish to be careful remember the second golden rule. Possess yourself of a mackintosh and umbrella, and use your common sense as to when you should arm yourselves with these.

These suggestions are by no means exhaustive, but they may lead some reader to practise that economy which shall result in a charming appearance under all circumstances, and a dainty and neat attire even upon very slender means. How much can be done by a little attention to the hints I have given, I will leave those who take them to discover for themselves.

THE YEAR'S JEWELS.

BY M. C. GILLINGTON.

PEARL : NOVEMBER.

Melancholy.

PALE moonshine drifts along the sea,
Grey glimmering light like that in dreams ;
Oh, who is this that walks by me,
Wan as the wan moonbeams ?

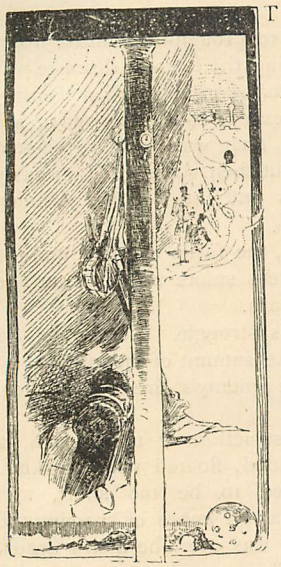
All wet her long entangled curls,
All wet with sea her garments cling,
And round her neck a string of pearls
Gleams like a ghostly thing.

" These are the tears the sea hath shed,
But on my breast they turn to stone ;
The wailing sea that mourns its dead
In endless undertone.

" And these I gather all night long,
In strange sea-places far below,
Where the deep waves in surging song
Murmur their secret woe ! "

SHIPP'S LOOT.

BY C. N. BARHAM.



IT was half-past one in the afternoon.

Two o'clock had been fixed for the assault on Burtpore; and Shipp, who was to lead the forlorn hope, stood at the head of his men. He was gazing earnestly in the direction of his hoped-for quarry, little more than a mile distant, knowing that between it and him lay the valley of death. The company at his feet stood silent and serious, but not a man flinched; the desire for vengeance was strong in every heart. As Shipp was, so were they.

The ugly wound in Shipp's head had been bound up with a scarf, and he was carrying his left hand in a sling. The man looked fitter for bed than for battle; but assuring the doctors that he felt able to fight, and entreating them not to stand between him and glory, he had gained his point; and now stood, perhaps the only man in the world, prepared to lead, for the third time, a forlorn hope. It was weary waiting for the troops. Better a thousand times, they all thought, the roar of the guns and the grinning faces of the fiendish, thieving Pindarees than that trying period of masterly inactivity until two o'clock should sound.

"Shipp?"

Shipp started.

Lieutenant Temple, of the Seventy-sixth, stood beside him; he was holding a small Union Jack in his hand.

"Shipp," he said, "you are a monopolist of glory, and I'm come to rob you of a bit of it; for I mean to fix this flag on yonder bastion, or die in the attempt."

"There is both plenty of room and need for brave men, Lieutenant," Shipp answered quietly. "It is no child's play we're going into. Many a brave fellow will lose the number of his mess before we reach that bastion. Who can tell whether any of us will scale it?

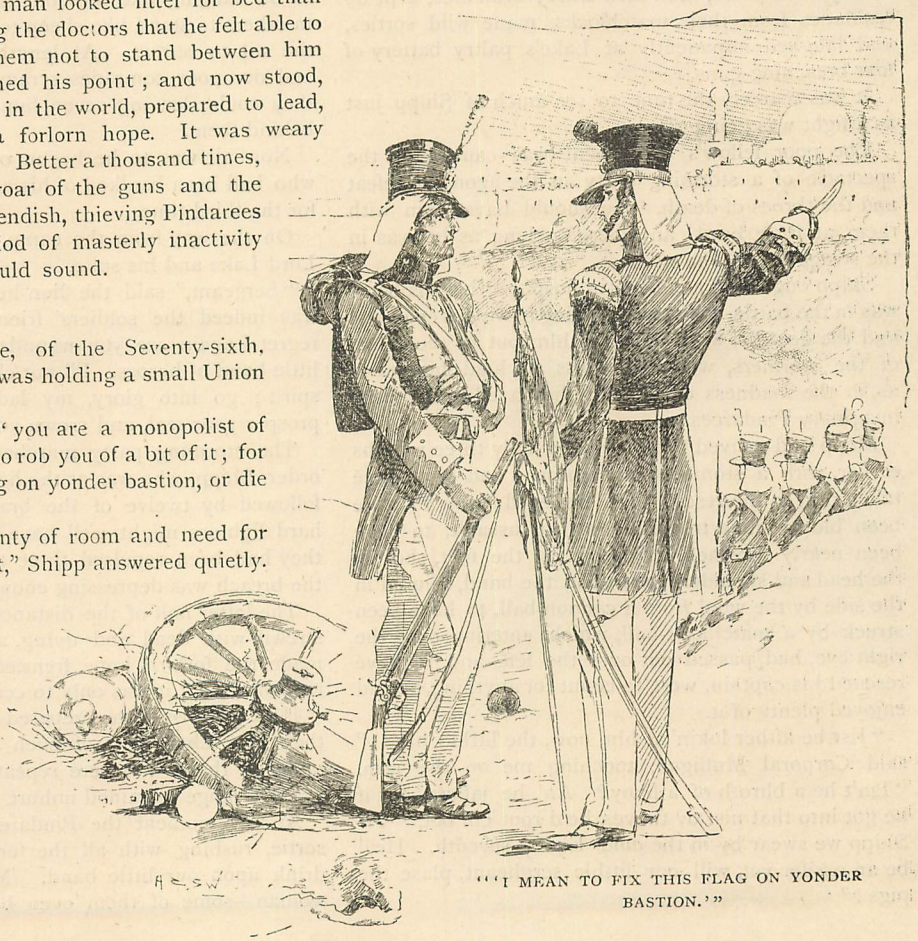
"Any way, we'll make a good bid for it, Shipp, you and I. Eh?"

"Thanks, Lieutenant. That's the sort of spirit we want among us to-day; and whatever can be done shall be done. Look at my fellows. I wouldn't care to be the foeman who had to meet them just now. They are mad drunk, every mother's son of them!"

"Drunk, Shipp! Surely not."

"No, not in your sense. Not with rum, but with the thoughts of their old comrades lying out in front of yonder glacis, stripped, some without heads, arms, or legs, and others literally cut to pieces."

I had seen Shipp the day before for the first time. He was then standing on the red-hot Indian plain, in front of a confused mass of excited spectators. His own mother wouldn't have known him that day; and the lad's sweetheart—that is, if he had one—would either have shrunk away from him in terror, or have thrown herself upon his breast at the risk of her life. The ways of women are unaccountable. Shipp was striking with



"'I MEAN TO FIX THIS FLAG ON YONDER BASTION.'"

imaginary swords, stabbing with imaginary bayonets, shouting, screaming, and shrieking like a madman. The old Berserker rage of battle was upon him.

The day was a scorcher for warm work, and it was decidedly warm work that our fellows were engaged in. The sun was hurling his pitiless rays down upon the blinding sands, which, like the vultures overhead, were thirsting for blood, until the thermometer stood at 100° in the shade. All around were drawn up troops, red-coated, high-stocked, knapsacked, strapped, buckled, pipe-clayed, uncomfortable, and furiously excited with the greed of war. Less than a mile in front of us lay Burtpore, as fiery as the bottomless pit, and twice as wicked. But between us and that choice morsel of hard knocks and rupees lay a ditch which would have to be filled up with dead men before it could be crossed.

One-eyed Holkar's army, after old Lake had shaken it up like so much newly-made hay, had rallied around and inside the town a mob of rascally Pindarees, and they were apparently resolved to stop there.

The brave-hearted Englishman, no less determined that they should not, had given them notice to quit, and now fretted and fumed outside, threatening to blow down the walls and burst open the doors, yet unable to make his words good.

The Pindarees, who were acquainted with their enemy's weakness, fired their heavy ordnance, kept up fusillades from their matchlocks, made wild sorties, and laughed impudently at Lake's paltry battery of four breaching-guns.

It was scarcely the time to see much of Shipp just as a fight was going on.

The poor fellow's excitement was caused by the spectacle of a storming party in the agony of defeat and the throes of death. He should have been with them, at their head: anywhere so long as he was in the struggle; and he was not.

Shipp ought to have been in hospital; but his heart was in the battle, for he was longing to win his epaulets; and the doctors, who had kept him out of the ranks of the stormers, were powerless to hold him now, as, in the madness of delirium, he raved and fought imaginary Pindarees.

Shipp had arrived from England only three months earlier, with a stomach for fighting; and if to have taken part in the rescue of a besieged force, to have been blown into a trench during an assault, to have been nearly drowned, bayoneted in the foot, shot in the head and shoulder, speared in the hand, injured in the side by the wind from a cannon-ball, to have been struck by a matchlock-ball, which, entering over the right eye, had passed out over the left, and to have rescued his captain, were to count for anything, he had enjoyed plenty of it.

"Jist be afther lukin' at him now, the litthle haro!" said Corporal Mulligan, touching me on the arm. "Isn't he a bhroth of a bhoy? An', be jabers! but if he got into that nist ov thaves, he'd rout 'em out. 'Tis Shipp we swear by in the ould Eighty-seventh. He'll be an ossifer yet, will our litthle sergheant, plase the pigs!"

But it was no time for talking; and, scarcely waiting for a reply, the corporal moved away. There was business to be done, for the fight was raging; and Lake, chafing like a mad tiger, saw that things were going badly.

Those were the days of real rough-and-tumble work, when the science of keeping the foe at a distance was little understood, and less admired: when Tommy Atkins asked for nothing except to be allowed to see his man, and go for him. That was what he wanted now, outside Burtpore; but then, there was that nasty trench, with the big guns and the fiendish grinning faces behind it.

The cannon thundered, the fusils cracked, and the cries of the black Pindarees smote upon the ear like the knife-sharp yells of death.

It was a cruel, hopeless struggle. No sooner did our bold fellows reach the summit of the imperfectly opened breach than the enemy's fire swept them away wholesale.

To neutralise the obstruction of the trench, a bamboo bridge was provided, floated with oil-skins. This unfortunately proved to be too short, and floated down stream, so that all hopes of crossing the ditch, the water in which was over the men's heads, had to be abandoned. The ground was strewn with killed and wounded. In one place the soldiers seemed to be hanging like flies on the edge of the bastion; in others to stand like sheep to be shot down, without the wit to retreat. At length the butchery ceased, and our poor comrades scrambled back the best way they could, leaving seven hundred dead and injured behind them.

Now all was to be begun over again; and Shipp, who had been baulked of his ardour, was to be leader for the third time.

On the way from the camp the forlorn hope met Lord Lake and his suite.

"Sergeant," said the lion-hearted old leader, who was indeed the soldiers' friend, "it is with sincere regret I again see you wounded at the head of your little band of heroes. I'll not check your praiseworthy spirit; go into glory, my lads; and may Heaven prosper your zeal, and crown you with triumph."

The storming party marched in the usual steady order, Shipp, who was at the head, being immediately followed by twelve of the bravest volunteers. The hard fighters might well have been discouraged, for they had been repulsed three times; and the sight of the breach was depressing enough.

The latter half of the distance to be traversed was strewn with dead and dying, and the sight of these made the forlorn hope frenzied for revenge. They rushed on, but it was only to certain death.

Holkar's men were prepared for every emergency; they wore chain-mail of such excellent temper that many of them who were repeatedly struck by bullets at close range remained unhurt.

At this moment the Pindarees made a desperate sortie, rushing with all the fury of fiends mad with drink upon our little band. More than one native woman—some of them even bearing children—took

part in this wild onslaught. At first the rush was successful; then discipline prevailed, and the surging mass was borne backward, howling and shrieking, towards the town; but immediately they had retreated guns swept every inch of the ground, rendering pursuit impossible.

The breach was not reached without much hard fighting; and when it was, nothing seemed to have been gained.

A perpendicular curtain went straight down to the moat, and there was literally no footing, except on pieces of trees and stones that had fallen from above. The so-called breach was a veritable gate of death. Shipp's twelve volunteers had, every one of them, been hurt. Still the heroes pushed on, only to find that the damage effected by our breaching-guns had been repaired by beams, stakes, bushes, and sharp-pointed bamboos. To throw themselves against these was only like kicking against the pricks. Through every nook and cranny of this new barrier a broad belt of spears was pushing and stabbing diagonally, with a fierce, ceaseless, regular motion, as if of some hitherto unheard-of piece of machinery. Against this concealed company of spearmen the forlorn hope could make no headway. They were mowed down without—most terrible of a soldier's experiences—being able to get at their enemies.

Shipp had not been long in the breach before a large shot was rolled down upon him from the top of the bastion, and he slipped back, until stopped by the bayonet of a grenadier, which passed through his foot.

A man of the Twenty-second Light Company, while generously assisting him to rise, was shot dead.

Shipp, lame, incapacitated, half-mad with the pain of the wound in his head, but still full of fight for the honour of old England, regained his position, only to see Lieutenant Temple, who had, after all, kept his word and planted his flag in the breach, cut down and split almost in two by a Mussulman soldier.

Then all was noise and confusion, sway and surge, cut and thrust, firing, swearing, groaning, yelling, dying; men had neither time nor heart for anything but to kill and be killed, like brutes. The villainous saltpetre had driven all civilisation out of them.

An explosion took place, but the din was so great that scarcely any of the combatants either heard or noticed it. A fire-pot fell upon Shipp's pouch, exploding his fifty rounds of ball cartridge. The explosion hurled him back to the bottom of the breach. When he recovered consciousness, he found his face scorched, his clothing on fire, and all the hair singed off the back of his head.

Crawling to the other side of the breach, he sat down, unable to move further, and feeling, in spite of his indomitable spirit, that his hour had come to die. At that moment a cannon-ball struck the bank, covering him with mud. As it did so his feet touched something soft and yielding, while he heard what was certainly not a battle-cry. It sounded strangely like the wail of a little child.

Stooping down, and feeling all around, Shipp discovered a dead body lying half buried in the *débris*. It was a woman's. To his amazement, he perceived that an infant nestled at the breast of the Pindaree female. It must have been this child that he had heard cry, for the little thing looked up into his burnt face with large round eyes full of ludicrous consternation.

This child, lying there in the midst of carnage, seemed an omen of hope to the crushed soldier. If such utter helplessness could live in the very heart of that Armageddon of destruction, why should he despair?

The contest raged without intermission, but Shipp knew that it could have but one result: the attack was doomed to fail.

Shipp had crawled nearly out of the ditch when he heard the retreat sounded. That terrible note cut him to the quick, and he was about to cry out, when he felt a stinging pain in his wounded arm, heard the first quick rush of retreat, and fell back unconscious.

Three hours later all sounds of strife had ceased, except for an occasional shot fired from Burtpore. The heat had given place to a refreshing coolness, which was grateful to the wounded who had been conveyed into hospital. The army lay, moody, in its encampment, brooding over its repulse, and bewailing the fate of its dead heroes.

Suddenly a heavy fire of musketry from the forts attracted general attention.

What did it portend? Perhaps it was the prelude to an attack.

We rather hoped it was, for we desired nothing better than an opportunity for meeting those dusky gentry face to face.

The troops sprang instinctively to arms, while the cavalry stood with hands on reins, ready to mount and gallop at the word of command.

"See, by the livin' Moses! if there baint one av our fellers a saykin' to esthcape frav that din av haythens; an' they're afther him loike locusts, the varmints!" exclaimed Corporal Mulligan, who had happily escaped injury.

It was as the corporal said.

A fugitive—evidently a white man—was seen staggering slowly and painfully across the sands, scarcely a quarter of a mile away.

Well in the rear, but gaining rapidly upon him, rode a squadron of hostile spearsmen, intent upon his capture.

At this moment a cavalry officer strode to the front, thundered out a hurried word of command, and in less time than one can tell it a hundred swordsmen dashed forth at a sharp trot to the succour of our endangered comrade. Then the trot quickened into a gallop, and the gallop grew faster and faster, until the ground shook beneath the horses' tread.

The soldiers dashed past the toiling, panting fugitive, in the direction of the Pindarees. The robbers saw them, checked their headlong speed, came on more slowly, halted, and turned to fly.

It was too late. The trained *sabreurs* of Britain dashed in among the villains, dealing death through

SHIPP'S LOOT.

their ranks, and scattering them like leaves before the wind.

All was over in less than ten minutes.

The victors returned slowly towards the camp. When they came up with the fugitive, their leader advanced to offer him assistance. Then he started backward, exclaiming:

"Shipp! Is it you? Thank God, my man, you are safe! We all thought you were rubbed out."

"Yes, captain, it is I. And, as you say, I thank God," Shipp faintly replied; for it was he.

The captain's eye had already perceived that Shipp carried a bundle pressed to his breast; and he said, with a smile:

"You are a strange fellow to have thought of loot at such a time as this. Most of us would have been only too thankful to have got off with life."

Shipp's face, haggard, blood-stained, and burnt as it was, lighted up with a smile as, drawing back a corner of a bundle handkerchief, he revealed to the astonished gaze of the officer a black baby sleeping peacefully.

CHIT-CHAT ON DRESS.—WHAT TO WEAR IN NOVEMBER.

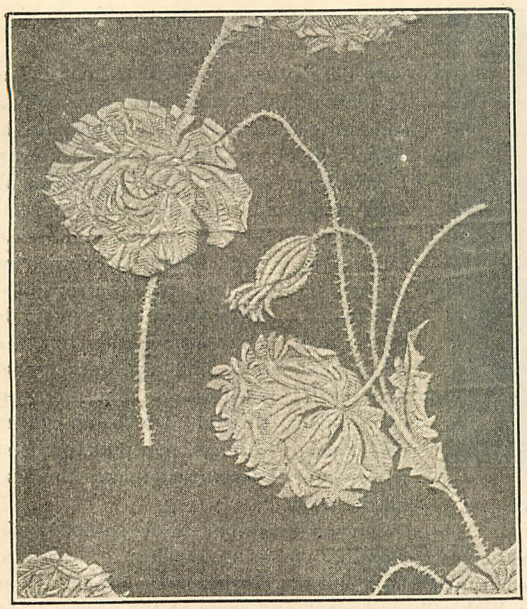
FROM OUR PARIS AND LONDON CORRESPONDENTS.

I.—FROM OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.

WHEN October wanes, winter's near approach is at hand, and winter clothes have to be considered. For the worst of this often inclement season I always advocate furbishing up the wardrobe in preference to buying much that is new. Old clothes, set well to rights, present a most respectable appearance in the dark days, and look uncommonly shabby in spring sunshine. Though, even when the sun shines in spring it is frequently cold, and a new warm gown then is not out of place.

Make your minds easy about skirts, the fiat is gone forth that we are to wear them short, and their arrangement is so simple, when thick winter stuffs are concerned, that you can quite well make them at home. But whatever they are, line them. Three yards is the usual width at the hem, which, according to the figure, diminishes to about two at the waist, each breadth being gored at the top. Do not make it too plain in the front, gather it slightly here, but bring the bulk of the fulness into three inches of the waistband in the centre of the back, and so that there can be no fear of the skirt gaping there. Tack to the left side of the placket-hole a strip three inches wide, thirteen and a half inches long, and hook this to an eye on the right side, before fastening any other hooks. A gored piece still forms a point in the centre of the back.

Long jackets for indoor wear are not going out, but the Russian blouse is to be the particular fashion of the year, high to the neck, with a high collar-band. It fastens at the side, is belted at the waist, and has a



WHITE POPPY BROCADE.

(By permission of Messrs. Dickens & Jones, Regent Street, W.)

gathered all-round basque, the sleeves full to the elbow, and tight to the wrist. Nothing can be easier to put on, or more comfortable when on.

But we will suppose you have an open jacket or jacket bodice you wish to furbish up. You cannot do better than adopt the Breton vest, of white cloth, or, indeed, any contrasting colour, trimmed with half-inch-wide gold, black, or coloured braid, carried round the straight collars (which are worn very high in Paris), and continued below the collar in some seven or eight rows, placed in a rounded form. These vests are shaped to the figure and are easily tacked in when needed.

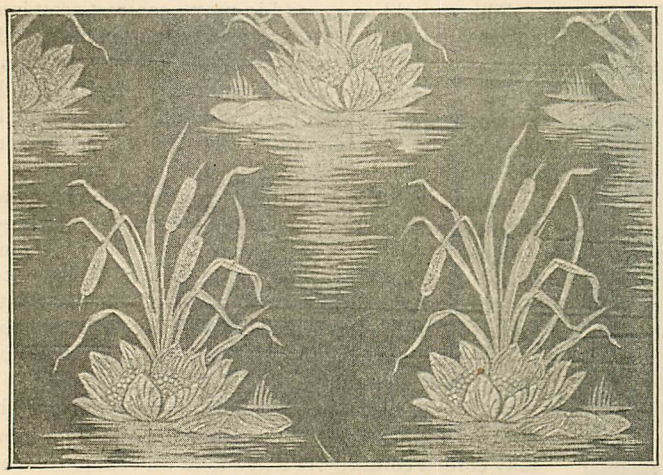
Frenchwomen are using a great deal of ribbon for trimming. About four inches is a useful width in satin or moiré. By means of a long length a black bodice can be quite transmogrified, always supposing the colour of the ribbon is well chosen. The mode of applying is as follows. Take one end, cut it diagonally and gather it, just as you would if you were about to sew it to a bow, pin this securely on the left of the bust, carry it across the figure, round the waist twice, and at the other end of the ribbon there must be a prettily arranged bow, which attach to the bust on the ribbon-end already there, by which means it will gracefully cross the figure. Sometimes such additions start from a bow on either shoulder, pass under the arm, cross at the back, surround the waist, and fasten at one side with another bow.

There is no doubt that the short-waisted Josephine gowns will be worn for full dress, and some charming silks are used for them, in the faintest pink, lettuce green, heliotrope, corn and turquoise tones. The ground is satin, with small dainty little bouquets which a shilling would cover, and in pretty contrast scattered all over them, they almost seem to be embroidered. Others, again, have similar sprigs divided by faint stripes in diagonal weaving, and in one piece of silk pink and grey are blended, or gold and tilleul, or pink and green. The contrasts are always pretty and effective.

The choice of cloaks this winter lies between the three-quarter jacket, of various widths, and those delightfully useful outdoor garments which reach from neck to heel, and make it a matter of little consequence what the gown beneath may happen to be. But whatever the length or style there must be a certain amount of fussiness about the shoulders, produced by capes or brace-like frillings.

The sac jacket, which has much to recommend it, is illustrated in the initial vignette; it is made of horizontally corded corduroy, of a new kind with cut pile. The trimmings are of black velvet accompanied by rows of Persian lamb, and a row of gold and black passementerie. The sleeves are enormously full, and the velvet frill which goes round the back, forming a deep point behind, is edged with the fur. Beaver and gold-braiding are much used on such jackets, but the Persian lamb is the most generally fashionable skin of the year, and somewhat costly. A woollen imitation

WAITING.



WATER-LILY AND BULRUSH BROCADE.
(*By permission of Messrs. Dickens & Jones, Regent Street, W.*)

can be substituted where the purse-strings cannot be made to open sufficiently wide, but it is only a poor replacement. Sleeves can hardly be too large at the top.

The two long mantles we illustrate are distinctive. The first has straight fronts and turn-back revers, trimmed with skunk, which shows to advantage in contrast with the drab-toned cloth, and the semi-fitting under-dress of darker velvet, edged with drab cord and gold passementerie. The sleeves are close-fitting, but fall over the hand, with bell cuffs, a fashion which the Parisians render more adaptable to daily use by lining the cuffs in such a decorative fashion that when they interfere with the free use of the hand, they can be turned upwards and assume the appearance of quite another make of sleeve. In the present instance those points are embroidered. The strips of fur pass from the front to the back, where they end in a V, and the capes, which add so much importance to the upper part of the sleeves, finish with the fur. The other figure wears a grey faced cloth, trimmed with silver fox-fur and ruches of cloth, which give the requisite fussiness. This garment has a box-pleat in front and a Watteau back, or two box-kilts at the back of the skirt, the bodice close-fitting. There are elbow bell sleeves and tight ones beneath. The cape-like trimming on the bodice makes the shoulders look broad. The hat is felt, with velvet bows.

Drop fringes are being used at the edges of skirts and mantles, and those who have any treasures of the kind laid by could resuscitate them to advantage. The same style of adornment was employed only a few years since. Sealskins are made up into three-quarter jackets with astrakan square collars and mousquetaire cuffs, but the all-round Tudor sealskin mantles are never made with the full cape. Sometimes the sealskin is left unadorned, sometimes sable, mink, or astrakan bands border it. A most excellent seal plush is manufactured which stands rain and weather, is exactly suited to hard wear and knockabout travelling, and can be made up into any shape that sealskin is known to assume.

II.—FROM OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENT.

THE demon fog so permeates our life in London in the winter, that it is really a comfort to know that we are to have bright colours in our millinery and our gowns. I have been seeing useful dresses for all sorts and conditions of women, and the dark colours are, in nearly every case, relieved by bright red spots, or weaving of some light colour; even the reps have threads of coloured silk at close intervals, grass-green being a favourite tint. A new double cloth, in black, dark brown, and myrtle, is so woven that there are open spots, through which an under-colour peeps—orange, red, pink, or heliotrope—and the contrast makes the hues all the warmer.

Do you remember the old corded muslin petticoats? Possibly you are too young, for I speak of twenty years ago, but the fashion has come back to us in both silk and wool, and some of the newest bridal gowns are made of corded silks, with heavy upstanding cords, while several of the most stylish season gowns have black wool cords, of strikingly large proportions, separated by horizontal silk threads—blue and drab, pink and grass-green, and so on. Most of these fabrics are forty-eight inches wide, so that the skirts need few seams.

I like the new corduroys extremely; they differ from the corded cloths in so far that the lines are perpendicular and not horizontal—very coarse and much closer together, with just one thread of contrasting silk between.

The rougher winter stuffs are extremely rugged, often as thick as a blanket, some woven with loose, coarse threads, like basket cloth, with curves and most unexpected flecks of colour—grey, of a bluish tint, or bright pink or light blue. Velvet stripes, erect and diagonal, are introduced in diagonal cloths. As an example of colouring, I mention one—blue and brown—with diagonal ground stripes, formed half of brick red, half of sea-green plush. Even ordinary serge is made brilliant by cord stripes of royal blue, apparently sewn over with blue. Everybody, possibly, does not see all these, for they are the newest of the new.

Some of the season's colours are paradise yellow, greys (like nickel and platinum), varec or mossy green, aloes (the new shade), and angelique, like apple. Flescine is a reddish slate, for all the colours blend into each other, and are enhanced by the admixture. Tucks of velvet, cut singly on the cross, and bands of fur, are used as skirt trimmings; but there is an immense deal of braiding, and the plainness of many gowns is relieved by panels introduced on either side of the front breadth, as in the sketch—a pointed vest on the bodice carrying out the same idea. This style gives length to the figure, whereas the horizontal bands diminish it. Such braiding suits plain materials best, or stuffs of a dark tone, relieved by bright spots or

other figures; then the ground of the braiding matches the dress, and the braid is of the contrasting colour.

In my pursuit of knowledge I read much of the modes, and my sympathies are certainly greatly excited on behalf of those who are blessed with *embonpoint*. They would look stately and comely if you could reduce the redundancy of flesh which most of the fashions of to-day display only too forcibly. I have, however, found two styles of bodice which, I think, meet the difficulty—the one was cut *en Princesse* at the back, but in front the side pieces were elongated into deep ends, edged with drop-fringe, which broke the undue size of the hips. The other was a loose jacket, with plain fronts, like a man's coatee; this fastened at the neck with a button. It was not ungraceful, but quite new, and effected its purpose admirably.

A favourite form of trimming on all dress bodices just now is a full frill revers, arranged to form an epaulette on the shoulder; and loose Senorita jackets and bodices trimmed in that form are really smart.

Double skirts, coming straight from the waist to the knee, are creeping in on the heels of the Russian modes, but they cut the figure terribly. A man's dress coat with silk lapels has been faithfully copied for women's wear. Swiss belts are represented by an overbodice of contrasting material such as velvet, which ends at the bust and forms the top of the sleeve.

Smocking will never go out of fashion, but there is something newer—viz., congregated tucking. This has been used for the yoke belt and gauntlets of the pretty child's dress in the picture, which is so daintily embroidered on the turn-down collar and the hem of the skirt. Many of the English leaders of fashion are discarding the high, straight, all-round collars which, when worn at all, are unusually high, but are now frequently replaced by a turn-down collar, or a Toby frill, both of which, some years ago, were banished with perfect disgust; they had been so badly worn, everyone was tired of them. Sleeves are nearly tight from the elbow to the wrist; the huge dimensions are relegated to the upper part of the arm, in one or two puffs.

Capes are being worn in cloth and fur. A good model is to be seen with the braided dress. It is made in green faced cloth, edged with black moiré ribbon. There are, in fact, four capes united, and the stand-up collar is a favourite shape for sealskin jackets, as well as cloaks.

To facilitate home dress-making, I am going to tell you a little as to the quantity of stuff needed for various articles of attire. Five yards of double-width material will make an ordinary dressing-gown. Five yards are needed for a petticoat with two narrow frills, and two and a half of wide woollen stuff, if a foot frill is needed. A dozen yards of calico must be reckoned for half-a-dozen chemises, and nine yards for the same quantity of knickerbockers. I do not recommend the following plan, I simply tell you that it is much adopted. Many women wear no underlinen save woollen combinations, and over these, in cold weather, full flannel drawers and woven woollen petticoat bodices. They reduce the washing bill in this manner considerably, for with several of the new preparations, woollens can be cleansed at home most speedily.

Dressing jackets take two and a half yards. Six yards of serge, double width, are required for a winter dress; three and a half yards of silk are needed for a satisfactory blouse. Some of the blouses imported from Paris fasten invisibly at the back beneath a small box pleat, which allows the trimming of lace and baby ribbon to fall undisturbed in the front. Wide cuffs of lace give a dressy appearance, enhanced by gold embroidered Senorita jackets, which are to be recommended because they are not likely to go out of fashion, and

TIME FOR LESSONS.

the untarnishable gold is so well worked it can be adapted to other decorative purposes when the original object is of no further use. The Empire style is the prevailing one for evening dress—scanty skirts and extremely short waists. It will have its following, but will be worn by some and ignored by others, for it is trying and requires the best of good dressmaking.

The brocaded satins are exquisite this season in design and colouring as well as in quality. The two illustrations give an idea of the patterns most in vogue for trains for dinner and evening dresses generally. They are floral, and stand out well in relief from their sheeny satin backgrounds.

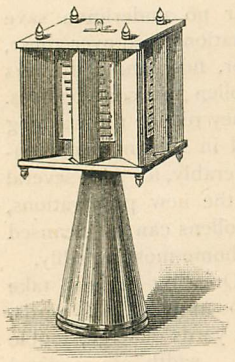
In the water-lily and bulrush brocade, the flowers float naturally as if in water, the rushes forming a graceful appropriate addition. In the white poppy brocade two full-blown flowers, with their buds and leaves, form handsome trails, producing the richest and most attractive effect.

THE GATHERER:

AN ILLUSTRATED RECORD OF INVENTION, DISCOVERY, LITERATURE, AND SCIENCE.

Correspondents are requested, when applying to the Editor for the names and addresses of the persons from whom further particulars respecting the articles in the GATHERER may be obtained, to forward a stamped and addressed envelope for reply, and in the case of inventors submitting specimens for notice, to prepay the carriage. The Editor cannot in any case guarantee absolute certainty of information, nor can he pledge himself to notice every article or work submitted.

A New Æolian Harp.



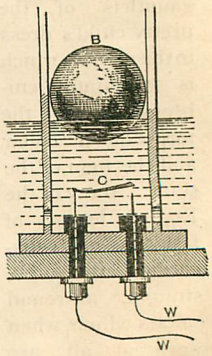
The old-fashioned Æolian harp was usually made about 4 feet high by 18 inches wide and 9 inches thick, and contained from seven to twenty-one strings, which were apt to get out of tune. In the "Æolia," as it is called, there are no strings, but eighty sensitive metallic reeds divided into harmonic chords of twenty notes each. The apparatus is shown in the engraving, and is 20 inches high by 8 inches wide and 8 inches deep. As the upper part revolves it plays one chord after another, no matter from which direction the wind is coming. All the reeds keep in tune and sound into one common organ tube which harmonises the chords. It is intended to be hung on a tree, or fixed on a post, say in a garden or by some ruined castle.

An Automatic Telephone Exchange.

An American inventor has boldly attempted to dispense with the assistance of operators in telephone exchanges, by introducing an automatic mechanism to take their place. At present when a subscriber to a telephone exchange wishes to speak by telephone to another subscriber he calls up the operator in the exchange, explains to him or her what he wants, and the operator then connects his telephone with that of the other subscriber. With the new Strowger apparatus, which is on view in New York, the subscriber can make the desired connection himself. He is provided with five keys or contact makers for opening or closing electric circuits. Four of these are marked "units," "tens," hundreds," "thousands"; and if we suppose that the number of the subscriber he wishes to speak with is 131, he presses the unit key once, the tens key thrice, and the hundreds key once. In so doing he transmits corresponding electric currents to the exchange where they actuate a small automatic apparatus which connects his line with that of the subscriber No. 131. The connection can be made although there are thousands of subscribers to the exchange, and when the conversation is over the subscriber, by pressing the fifth key, breaks the connection and restores the original condition of the circuits. The automatic circuit-connector is only a small instrument six inches long by four inches broad and thick; nevertheless, it can establish the connection between any two of the thousands of subscribers on the exchange, by means of wires running to it and internal mechanism, which it is unnecessary to describe. There is one for every subscriber to the exchange, and so long as these are kept in working order no staff of operators is required. If the invention satisfies practical telephonists it will effect a revolution in the present method of managing telephone exchanges.

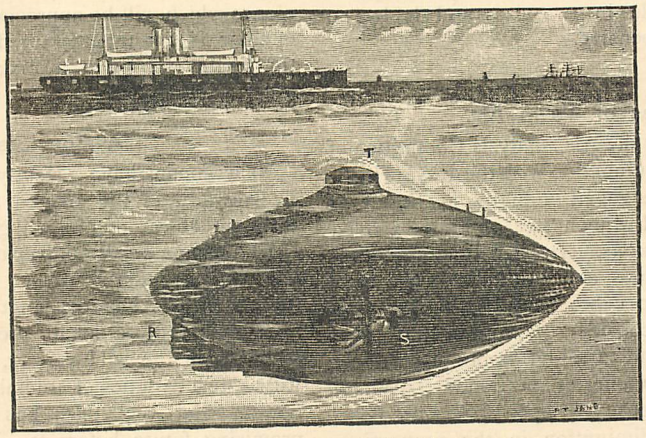
An Electric Water Level Tell-Tale.

An electric tell-tale for giving an alarm when the water in a steam boiler sinks below a certain level has been devised by Mr. M. S. Matthews, of Montreal, Canada. As illustrated in the figure, it consists of a tube or casing supported in the water and containing a ball float which rises or falls with the water. When the level of the water becomes too low the ball bears on a spring contact, C, thus completing an electric circuit, W W, in connection with a bell or gong which is thereby sounded.



A New Submarine Boat.

During the past summer a new submarine boat, invented by Mr. Baker, has been successfully tried on the Detroit River, near Detroit, U.S.A. As shown in the sketch it consists of an egg or capsule-shaped hull, built of stout oak planks and capable of withstanding the pressure of the surrounding water at a depth of eighty or a hundred feet. It is fitted with two screw-propellers, O, S, one on each side, and the rudder, R, sits close to the hull. The conning tower on the top is shown at T. When the boat rises to the surface a funnel is extruded and a steam engine inside is connected to the propellers; but when she is submerged by pumping water into her tanks, the steam engine is discarded, and an electric motor, fed by charged accumulators, is brought into gear with the screws. A speed of eight or ten miles an hour has been attained. The interior of the craft is lighted by electricity, and can accommodate several men. Only two are required to manipulate the vessel, and the hull, which is forty feet long, contains sufficient air to allow of their being under water for about three hours. While upon this subject we may mention that Captain McEvoy, a well-known British electrician, is stated to have invented an electric apparatus by which a torpedo boat cannot approach within three miles of ironclads in roadsteads without signalling their presence by ringing a bell on board the ironclad and even firing an alarm gun.



A NEW SUBMARINE BOAT.

An Electro-Photographic Thief Detector.

Not long ago a cigar merchant of Toledo, Ohio, U.S.A., repeatedly missed cigars from a show-case in his office, and having employed detectives to watch the premises in vain, he at last hit on the plan of photographing the thieves by an instantaneous camera and a flash light. An electric circuit was so arranged that in opening the show-case the thieves would close the circuit and send an electric current by wires to a box containing a camera directed on the case. The current, by means of electro-magnets, not only lifted the shutter of the case, thus exposing the camera for a short time, but also struck a match on a rough disc and ignited a flash light. One night after the apparatus was installed two boys entered the office, and while opening the case were promptly photographed. The picture led to their apprehension, trial, and punishment.

The Submarine Eruption of Pantellaria.

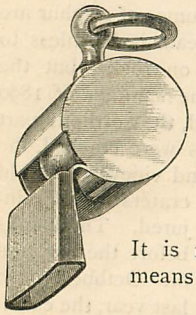
South of Sicily there is a volcanic region which breaks out now and then: for example, in 1831, when Graham's Island rose from the sea; and again in October of last year, when a submarine eruption was seen north-west of the island of Pantellaria, and telegraph cables were damaged in the vicinity. Signor A. Ricco has investigated this disturbance and has given the following particulars of it. Pantellaria is a volcanic island about ten miles long by five miles wide. It possesses hot springs, those at the lake "Bagno del Acqua" being so rich in alkalies as to make a lather and be used in washing clothes. Fumaroles or vents of carbonic acid, steam, and the hot fumes of sulphur are also found on the island. The steam is harmless to vegetation and has little effect on rocks, but the sulphur decomposes them. In the summer of 1890 earthquakes occurred in the island, the northern part of the coast was elevated, cisterns were cracked, the activity of fumaroles increased, and vineyards in old craters were injured. Three days before the eruption on October 17th last year, the earthquakes began again, the ground was cracked, certain springs dried up, and the north coast was apparently raised a little higher. Black "bombs" of scoriæ rose to the surface along a zone a kilomètre in length from north-east to south-west, which probably indicated a volcanic fissure. Some of the bombs ran hissing over the water under the recoil of the steam they were discharging. A number of them were hot enough inside to fuse zinc—that is to say, their temperature was 415° C., and one glowed red-hot in daylight with a temperature something under 800° C. Fragments were exploded to a height of twenty mètres in the air, and then sank in the water. Visitors to the spot found the temperature of the water raised $1\frac{1}{2}$° C. above that of the surrounding sea, and a smell as of gunpowder in the air. The spongy matter of the bombs emitted an odour of sulphur when hot, and bubbles of gas were seen to rise from the surface of the waters. The eruption terminated on October 25th, and the district has been quiescent ever since, in spite of telegrams in some English newspapers to the contrary.

Kola and Fatigue.

In June last four cyclists covered the distance between Paris and Clermont-Ferrand, 397 kilomètres, in 17 hours or thereabout. The speed of the winner,

an Englishman of 18 years, was 22·802 kilomètres an hour; but he was greatly exhausted by his effort. The second was a Frenchman of 28 years, who accomplished 22·055 kilomètres an hour without fatigue. The first supported his energies on alcohol, champagne, bouillon and solution of kola; the second on bouillon, tea, and kola. The other two competitors, who did 21·957 and 19·790 kilomètres an hour, took bouillon, coffee, and wine, but no kola, a fact which is worthy of note by amateur cyclists.

A Loud Whistle.



A whistle which can sound a very loud blast with a slight expenditure of force will be useful to many, for example, cyclists, firemen, and others. The "Thunderer" whistle, which we illustrate, is of this class, and has, we believe, been adopted by the Glasgow police force. It is made in two sizes and is by no means expensive.

Impurities of Town Air.

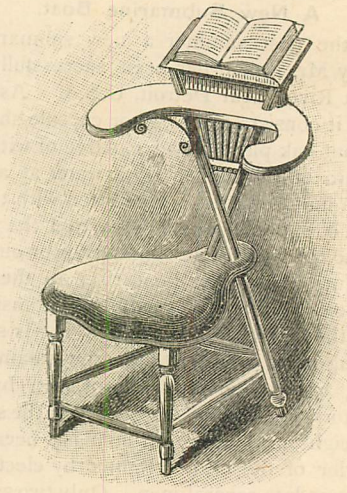
During the past year the Air Analysis Committee of Manchester have, in conjunction with the Royal Horticultural Society, been engaged in analysing the air of London, Liverpool, and Manchester, and have arrived at the following conclusions. In clear breezy weather the quantity of sulphurous acid in the air is less than 1 milligramme per 100 cubic feet; but during anticyclones it rises very considerably, and in thick fogs attains as much as 34 and 50 milligrammes respectively in the worst parts of Manchester and London. Where the population is less dense and open spaces are near, there is a marked diminution in the proportion. Smoke is the principal cause of atmospheric impurity in our large towns, in the opinion of the Committee, as it promotes fog and prevents a free diffusion of the lower into the upper strata.

An Electric Census Machine.

In Canada at the last census a machine worked by electricity was employed to enumerate the results. A series of holes punched in a card represented the desired particulars about a person, and then, on being passed through the machine, controlled the current operating an indicator which recorded the facts. Such a device is, of course, impartial so long as it works properly, and is at least a useful check on personal enumeration.

A Reading Chair.

The chair which we illustrate is an improved model of one long used by the Duke of Wellington at Walmer Castle. The back is so formed that a person can sit in the chair in the ordinary way or he can sit astride and lean his arms on the shelf with the book before



A READING CHAIR.

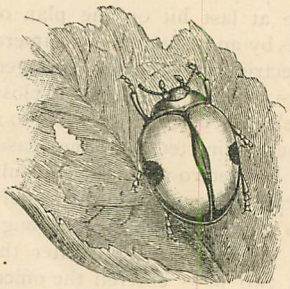
him. The change of position is a practical convenience which will be appreciated by many. This kind of chair is not manufactured so far as we know; but the figure will guide a maker in constructing it to order.

A Boneless Shad.

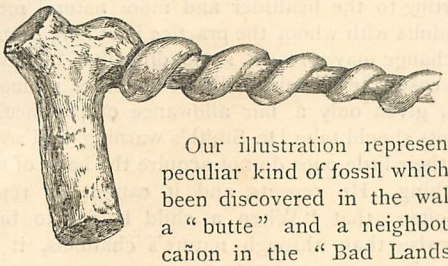
Experiments have recently been made by Mr. D. E. Crawford, of the United States Fish Commission, with the object of producing a variety of the edible shad having a small number of bones, that is, say, as few as a flounder or sole. By dint of perseverance the naturalists have at length contrived to breed a shad with only a small proportion of the number of bones in the wild variety. This method of cultivating new varieties of animals as gardeners cultivate flowers and vegetables has to all appearance a promising future before it. We may yet be able to breed stingless bees, venomless snakes, and so on. The deficiency of one variety can thus be supplied by means of another, and noxious attributes caused to disappear.

A Useful Lady-Bird.

The fruit-growers of California have suffered great losses through the ravages of a species of aphis known there as "cottony cushion scale," but a remedy for the pest has been found in the Australian lady-bird, *Novius koebeli*, which preys on the aphis, and has been acclimatised in California. The lady-bird, when full grown, is about one-eighth of an inch in length. It is chiefly of a dark-red colour with black lines and markings, as shown in the illustration which represents the male. In the female the black medial line only extends half-way down the back.



A Corkscrew Fossil.



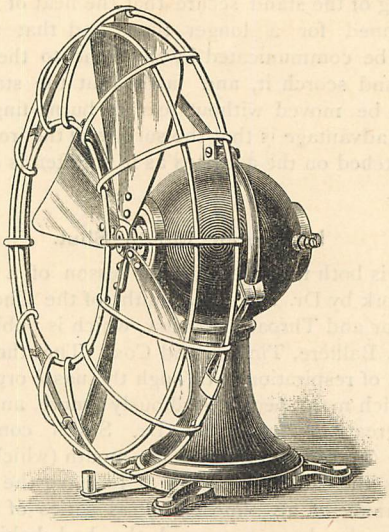
Our illustration represents a peculiar kind of fossil which has been discovered in the walls of a "butte" and a neighbouring cañon in the "Bad Lands" of North-western Nebraska, U.S.A. These "fossil corkscrews," as they are called for want of a better name, are in some cases thirty to forty feet long, and they are usually found in a vertical position in the crumbling sandstone which forms their matrix or mother rock. The specimen shown in the figure closely resembles a thick vine twisting round a pole; but many are without the pole or straight upright, though all seem to have the larger branch or crutch. American geologists have not yet decided what this remarkable fossil is; but it appears to be the petrified case of some plant or animal resembling a worm. The skin or shell of the fossil is silicious, but the core is the soft sandstone of the district. We may add that a field party of students and their professors, from the State University of Nebraska, have gone to the district to procure more specimens.

An Electric Fan Motor.

The especial merit of this electric ventilating fan and motor is its compact and self-contained character. The coil and field magnets are enclosed in the iron keeper or yoke which is all but spherical; there is no sparking at the commutator, and it runs at a speed of 900 to 1,800 revolutions a minute. There are five different sizes of the motor with its fan. That of one-twelfth horse-power runs at a mean speed of 1,150 revolutions a minute, with a current at a pressure of 110 volts.

Crystal Vision.

"Crystal gazing" or "crystal vision" is the name given by psychologists to the mental phenomenon of seeing pictures in water, mirrors, crystals, and other clear bodies, which have played an important part in the witchcraft of olden times. It is somewhat akin to seeing "faces in the fire," and some people have the gift very highly developed. Numerous examples were cited by Mr. Myers at the recent Congress of Experimental Psychologists, held in London. One lady, who has experimented with her faculty of crystal gazing for some years, once saw and read in the crystal an announcement of the death of one of her friends. On looking at the *Times* for that day the notice could not be found, but it was discovered in a prior copy of the same newspaper. The lady was unconscious of having read it there, and it is supposed that her eyesight had conveyed it to her brain without her mind being aware of it, while she happened to hold the paper up between her and the light, as she could remember having done. From this it would appear that we derive information from the outside world without knowing it, and that information may come into our consciousness at a future time, it may be in a dream. Thus there are cases of persons dreaming where a lost article is lying and finding it there, although they had looked for it in the same place or near it without seeing it. Hypnotised subjects can also see pictures or images of stories which have been "suggested" to them. At one of the séances of the Congress Dr. Bramwell, of Goole, Yorkshire, performed some most interesting experiments on four private subjects, two young men and two young women, who had consented to appear before the meeting in furtherance of science. One of the men was put into a mesmeric sleep and told the story of Robinson Crusoe discovering the footprint in the sand. On being recalled from the sleep he stated that he had heard or seen nothing the while. Yet when the crystal was put into his hands he saw there a picture of Crusoe alarmed at the footprint, and described it in his own words. The story of Vivien beguiling Merlin, which is less common, and was probably never heard by him before, was also suggested to him, and on awakening from the trance, he, without knowing that he had been told the story, saw it enacted in the glass, and gave a crude but faithful account of the scene. As a good deal of misconception exists with regard to the safety of such experiments, we may add that Dr. Bramwell stated, and practically demonstrated before the Congress, that all his subjects have the power of exercising their free will while hypnotised, and choosing whether or not they will do what he asks them to do. In fact, a hypnotised person need not perform any act of which he or she may disapprove. At the close of the experiments he made the subjects wake up perfectly bright and happy, in full possession of all their faculties, and, as they were going home to Yorkshire the same evening by the boat, he told them not to be sea-sick, and none of them, he assured us,



AN ELECTRIC FAN MOTOR.

would be, for as hypnotism cures pain, drunkenness, hypochondriac and other fears, so is it a remedy for sea-sickness.

The Development of Children.

At the Edinburgh meeting of the British Association Dr. Francis Warner read a paper on the physical deviations from the normal standard which he had observed in 50,000 children. On all the cases 13·4 per cent. of boys and 9·6 per cent. of girls deviated from the normal. Smallness of head was the principal defect amongst the girls. A greater amount of deviation was observable in the wealthier districts of London than in the poorer. Defects of the nervous system are, according to his observations, increased by taking children from their homes and putting them into institutions. The inquiry is important, but there is a danger in drawing too sweeping conclusions from insufficient data, and it may be that more extended observations will qualify or even overthrow some of these conclusions.

A Submarine Ear.

The French naval authorities are engaged in testing a submarine microphone, which may be regarded as an extension of the powers of hearing under water. The microphone is placed in a watertight case and immersed in the sea. Wires lead from it to the battery and telephone on board the vessel. When a noise is made under water, by the vibration of a distant vessel or torpedo, for example, the microphone conveys the sound to the ear of the auditor.

A New Stand for Flat Irons.

There has recently been patented a new stand for flat irons, which has much to commend it to housewives. The frame is made of wood, and this is covered by asbestos cloth or some other material of like properties, which is not a conductor of heat, and is non-combustible. In use these properties of the covering of the stand secure that the heat of the iron is retained for a longer time, and that the heat cannot be communicated by the stand to the ironing sheet and scorch it, and lastly that the stand may always be moved without fear of burnt fingers. A further advantage is that the surface of the iron cannot be scratched on the asbestos as it so often is on metal stands.

Keep your Mouth Shut.

This is both the title and the lesson of a valuable little work by Dr. F. A. A. Smith, of the Cheltenham Eye, Ear and Throat Infirmary, which is published by Messrs. Ballière, Tindall, and Cox. That the natural method of respiration is through the nasal organs is a fact which many people studiously ignore, and this to their great detriment, as Dr. Smith conclusively shows. To breathe through the mouth (which, during sleep, is the cause of snoring) is to pave the way for the entrance of an almost endless series of ills, and anyone who has contracted the bad habit should follow our author's hints as to the best means for reverting to the healthier and more natural method. To adults with whom the practice is of long standing, the change may present some difficulty, but even in such cases there ought to be no doubt of ultimate reform, given only a fair allowance of patience. All parents should take Dr. Smith's warning, and see to it that their little ones do not acquire the habit of mouth breathing. He repeats, and it cannot be repeated too often, that "When a child begins to breathe otherwise than through nature's channels, it is in danger."

A Cheap Dictionary.

A new edition, at a reduced price, has just been published of "Cassell's English Dictionary," which, in a single volume of 1,100 pages, gives the definition of upwards of 100,000 words and phrases, clearly printed and well arranged. It is handy in size and easily used for reference, but it does not sacrifice its comprehensiveness to secure this advantage.

In Case of Fire.

In a little pamphlet recently issued by Messrs. A Boyd and Son, under the title "Self-Help in an Alarm of Fire," Mr. R. W. Boyd has put together a few of the most prominent causes of fires in private dwelling houses, together with some admirable suggestions for securing the greater safety, both of person and property, in the dread event of an alarm of fire. One suggestion is eminently practical, and might, even with advantage, be adopted by local authorities: "Considering that fires usually result from some unknown cause, every house should be examined at least once a year to make sure that no avoidable sources of danger exist. At the same time, all life-saving apparatus should be actually tested by a competent and unprejudiced man." There is certainly a good deal to be said for this plan, seeing the risk which a fire brings upon his neighbours, as well as upon the man to whose neglect it may be due. And here is another hint, which ought certainly to be put into compulsory practice in the case of all *public* buildings, and might with advantage be adopted, at any rate, in private dwelling-houses of any size: "Unless there is a good supply of water at the top of the house, it is well to have three or more buckets standing always full of water at useful parts of the house." And many a fire which has ultimately assumed the character of a conflagration would have been extinguished before much damage had been done if people could only have been impressed with the warning, "In case of fire, keep *all doors shut* as far as possible. This greatly prevents it spreading, by stopping the draught."

Four-Part Story Competition.

The manuscripts are now under consideration and the award will be published as early as possible.